

A REVIEW OF INTIMATE HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

Date:

SUMMARY

Intimate heterosexual relationships play a vital role in shaping the lives of many people, and have therefore become an important topic of research within psychology. The South African population is also currently faced with many prevalent psychosocial problems, such as HIV/Aids, rape, violence against women and divorce, which need to be contextualised within the context of intimate heterosexual relationships. Research on intimate heterosexual relationships has therefore become a priority. In order to determine directions and priorities for such research, the objective of this assignment was to provide a review of selected international and South African research on intimate heterosexual relationships. This review focused on: the definition and operationalisation of intimate heterosexual relationships; the salient theoretical frameworks used; the characteristics of participants; as well as the methodologies employed by relationship researchers.

The review highlighted the following: A variety of terms is used by relationship researchers to conceptualise intimate heterosexual relationships which makes it difficult to integrate intimate heterosexual relationship research. Although theoretical frameworks like the social learning theory, cognitive behavioural theory and some metatheoretical perspectives such as postmodernism, feminism and social constructivism are utilised, South African relationship researchers mostly have an atheoretical approach to research. A review of the research participants revealed that most participants in South African relationship studies are married adults. While the male-female ratio of the participants was balanced, the diversity of the South African population was not well represented in these studies. Researchers mostly used qualitative research strategies and employed the survey method of data gathering. Based on these findings, it was recommended that relationship researchers should recognise the need to clarify the relationship concepts used in their studies; attempt to incorporate better-known relationship theories; ensure that the South African population is well represented; and to combine qualitative research strategies with quantitative research strategies.

OPSOMMING

Intieme heteroseksuele verhoudings speel 'n deurslaggewende rol in die vorming van baie mense se lewens en het daarom 'n belangrike navorsingsonderwerp in sielkunde geword. Die Suid-Afrikaanse populasie staan tans verskeie psigososiale probleme soos MIV/Vigs, verkragting, geweld teen vrou en egskeiding in die gesig, wat almal binne die konteks van intieme heteroseksuele verhoudings gekonseptualiseer behoort te word. Navorsing oor intieme heteroseksuele verhoudings het daarom 'n prioriteit geword. Ten einde rigtings en prioriteite vir sulke navorsing te bepaal, was die doel van hierdie werksopdrag om 'n oorsig te voorsien van selektiewe internasionale en Suid-Afrikaanse navorsing oor intieme heteroseksuele verhoudings. Hierdie oorsig het gefokus op: die definisie en operasionalisering van intieme heteroseksuele verhoudings; die prominente teoretiese raamwerke wat gebruik is; die karaktereienskappe van die deelnemers; so wel as die metodologieë wat deur verhoudingsnavorsers gebruik is.

Die oorsig het die volgende duidelik gemaak: 'n Verskeidenheid van terme word deur verhoudingsnavorsers gebruik om intieme heteroseksuele verhoudings te konseptualiseer en die die integrasie van intieme heteroseksuele verhoudingsnavorsing word daardeur bemoeilik. Alhoewel teoretiese raamwerke soos die sosiale leerteorie, kognitiewe gedragsteorie en sekere metateoretiese perspektiewe soos postmodernisme, feminisme en sosiale konstruktivisme gebruik word, het Suid-Afrikaanse verhoudingsnavorsers grotendeels 'n ateoretiese benadering tot navorsing. 'n Oorsig van die deelnemers van die studies het getoon dat die meeste deelnemers in Suid-Afrikaanse verhoudingstudies getroude volwassenes is. Terwyl die man-vrou ratio van die deelnemers gebalanseerd was, is die diversiteit van die Suid-Afrikaanse populasie nie goed verteenwoordig in die studies nie. Navorsers gebruik meestal kwalitatiewe navorsingstrategieë en gebruik grotendeels die opame-metode van dataherwinning. Op grond van hierdie bevindinge, is daar aanbeveel dat verhoudingsnavorsers die behoefte aan die verheldering van verhoudingskonsepte in hulle studies moet herken; moet poog om meer bekende verhoudingsteorieë te inkorporeer; te verseker dat die Suid-Afrikaanse populasie goed verteenwoordig is; en kwalitatiewe navorsingsstrategieë met kwantitatiewe navorsingstrategieë moet kombineer.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Relationships with others lie at the very core of human existence. Humans are conceived within relationships, born into relationships, and live their lives within relationships with others. Dependence on another human being is a fundamental fact of the human condition (Berscheid & Peplau, 1983).

Most people are acutely aware that their relationships play a crucial role in shaping the character of their lives and many people believe that their personal happiness is integrally bound to the state of their intimate relationships (Berscheid & Peplau, 1983). The great majority of people will experience multiple intimate relationships with partners over the course of a lifetime (Thompson & Amato, 1999) and one of the main challenges of adulthood is the establishment of long-term intimate relationships. Being a member of a couple can lead to tremendous personal growth and self-awareness, yet the failure of such a relationship can cause wounds that may take years to heal (Young & Long, 1998).

It is clear that the formation of intimate relationships has become more and more complex and therefore nowadays the outcome of these relationships is less certain than in previous decades (Thompson & Amato, 1999). Because of its uncertain state, intimate relationships has become an important topic of research within social psychology, as well as a meeting place of researchers from diverse disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and communication research (Berscheid, 1994).

Currently, the South African population is faced with a variety of psychosocial stressors (Family and marriage society of South Africa, 2004) of which many are closely linked to people's intimate heterosexual relationships. Besides the increasing divorce rate which indicate the difficulties people are experiencing in intimate relationships, other prevalent psychosocial issues like HIV/Aids, rape, divorce and violence against women, also need to be contextualised within the context of intimate heterosexual relationships. Research has for example shown that, in South Africa, HIV is mainly transmitted through unprotected heterosexual intercourse between a man and women, and that many of these intimate heterosexual relationships are characterised by a power imbalance between the male and female partners (Alexander & Uys, 2002). These power imbalances are for example reflected by many women's reluctance to disclose their HIV status to their male partners, as they fear that their partners will leave them or hurt them physically (Sethosa & Peltzer, 2005). The characteristics of these relationships (e.g. power imbalances, physical and emotional abuse, inability to communicate) are all important determinants in the

process of the HIV transmission, as well as the perpetuation of other psychosocial issues such as rape and violence against women. These psychosocial issues therefore need to be viewed, not as problems of individuals, but relationship problems.

In order to address these problems effectively, a comprehensive understanding of intimate heterosexual relationships is required. This raises the question of how much of an understanding we currently have of the intimate heterosexual relationships of the diverse South African population. The objective of this assignment was to address this question by reviewing selected international and South African research on intimate heterosexual relationships. This review will focus on the definition and operationalisation of intimate heterosexual relationships; the salient theoretical frameworks used; the populations represented in the studies; as well as the methodologies employed by relationship researchers. Final conclusions, implications, as well as recommendations for future research, will be presented.

2. CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

2.1 Literature search process

I started my research process with the objective of gaining an understanding of the status quo regarding South African research on *intimate relationships*. I was faced with two important questions, namely: what do researchers mean when they use the concept *relationship*? and what do they mean when they add the word *intimacy* to the concept *relationship*?

The most widely accepted definition of *relationship* is that a relationship exists to the extent that two people have strong, repeated and various effects on one another over an extended period of time. In other words, there is a strong form of interdependence between two people (Kelley et al., quoted in Reis & Rusbult, 2004). The word *intimacy* is derived from the Latin term *intimus*, which means inner or innermost. Therefore, the sharing of the deeply private parts of self seems to be a crucial factor in intimacy (Patridge, quoted in Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999). An intimate relationship can thus be defined as an interdependent relationship where the two people involved share deeply private parts of themselves with one another.

With this definition in mind, I used the following keywords in my initial literature search with electronic search engines: *intimate relationships*, *personal relationships* and *relationships*, but the search produced a limited number of references. I was therefore confronted with several

questions. Where and how should I search for relationship research? Which keywords will give me access to the bulk of research focusing on intimate relationships?

In order to make my search process more efficient I decided to expand the original concept of *intimate relationships* to *intimate heterosexual relationships*. With this addition, I was now specifically referring to the intimate relationship between a man and a woman, whether this relationship was sexual or not. My search process then indicated that various keywords (e.g. *marriage, marital relationships, romantic relationships, close relationships, couples, interpersonal relationships, personal relationships and intimate relationships*) provided access to intimate heterosexual relationship research.

In the process of accessing the required information on relationship research, I realised that researchers talk about relationships in a variety of ways. Berscheid (1994) reported that despite the phenomenal growth in relationship research over the past two decades, this research is of a fractured nature. According to her it is the multidisciplinary nature of relationship research that accounts for much of the fracturedness. Each discipline tends to address certain types of relationships. For example, sociologists' research is mostly focused on the changing forms and stability of family relationships; developmental psychologists' research on the relationship between parents and children as well as child-peer relationships; and social psychologists are usually interested in young adult relationships.

In addition to this multidisciplinary fractured nature of relationship research, my search for literature on intimate heterosexual relationships highlighted another aspect of relationship research, namely the variety of relationship terms. Within the field of psychology, various terms are used to describe intimate heterosexual relationships, for example: marriage, romantic relationships, close relationships and intimate relationships. It became clear that intimate heterosexual relationships are not described by a singular concept. It was also not clear whether different terms were used to differentiate between different types of relationships, or whether different terms were used to refer to the same type of relationships. This variety of relationship terms makes the conceptual integration of relationship research a very difficult, challenging and an almost impossible task.

I then realised that the issue of various relationship terms in intimate heterosexual relationship research would have to be clarified before I could continue my research process. Although my research is focused on researching intimate heterosexual relationships within the South African context, it is important to conceptualise this research within international relationship research.

Because South African relationship research is in its early stages of development, South African researchers often draw on international relationship research. The advanced nature of international relationship research provides valuable information about intimate heterosexual relationships and by including both South African and international relationship research trends I should be able to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the current use of terms within intimate heterosexual relationship research.

2.1.1 International literature

In addressing the issue of the variety of relationship terms in intimate heterosexual relationships, I have been selective in my choice of international material. I decided to include articles only from specific journals, and used the following keywords to select the articles: *marriage, close relationships, intimate relationships, heterosexual relationships, male-female relationships, and romantic relationships*.

Review articles from the journal *Annual Review of Psychology* were included. At present, this high-impact journal promotes the advancement of sciences through critical reviews, and is currently covering all the areas of psychology research and practice. These annual review articles provided me with an understanding of the growth of relationship research since 1978 to 2003, as well as the different terms that are used to describe relationships. Until the mid-1980s, this series offered only scattered references to marriage, marital therapy or marital interaction, but recently it has been giving more attention to close relationships as well as family therapy.

Two other journals, *Personal Relationships* and the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, were also included in my literature review. These two journals are sponsored by The International Association for Relationship Research (IARR). This association seeks to stimulate and support the scientific study of personal relationships, and also encourages cooperation among social scientists worldwide. The relevant titles, abstracts and articles from these two journals were selected by means of the above-mentioned keywords. I included titles from the journal *Personal Relationships* since 1994 and articles since 2002. Abstracts from the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* from 1998 to 2005 were selected. The latter provided me with information about terms such as *marriage, close relationships, intimate relationships, heterosexual relationships, male-female relationships* as well as *romantic relationships*. In other words, any article that reflected the term *intimate relationship* between a man and a woman was included in my literature search.

During the course of this literature search on intimate heterosexual relationships it became crucial to consider more therapeutically oriented relationship research. It was important to determine whether important knowledge about intimate heterosexual relationships is captured in research on therapeutic work with couples, or not. The following international journals and books (see also Appendixes A and C) on relationship therapy were consulted: the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, the *Journal of Family Psychology*, and the *Journal of Family Therapy*.

The *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* (preceded by the *Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling*) is published by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy that represents the professional interest of more than 23 000 marriage and family therapists throughout the United States, Canada and abroad. The *Journal of Family Psychology*, published by the American Psychological Association, is devoted to the study of the family system from a multitude of perspectives, and to the application of psychological policy. It encourages the integration of research and practice in the field of psychology. The *Journal of Family Therapy* (published on behalf of the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice) is a journal that advances the understanding and treatment of human relationships in systems such as couples, families as well as professional networks and wider groups, publishing articles on theory, research, clinical practice and training.

2.1.2 South African literature

The same keywords used in the study of the international literature were used to access South African literature on intimate heterosexual relationships. Various journals provided important information about the current state of South African research on intimate heterosexual relationships. The well-known journal, the *South African Journal of Psychology*, was the first journal consulted in my literature search. This journal publishes contributions from all fields of psychology. While the emphasis is on empirical research, the journal also accepts theoretical and methodological papers, review articles, short communications, reviews and letters containing fair commentary. Priority is given to articles which are relevant to Africa and which address psychological issues of social change and development.

Society in Transition, previously published under the title, the *South African Journal of Sociology*, was another important source of information. This is the official journal of the South African Sociological Association. The primary purpose of this journal is to promote the development of the sociology and the social sciences in South Africa. It does this primarily through inviting, refereeing and publishing high quality and original scholarly articles. It publishes theoretical,

empirical as well as methodological articles. Although other journals such as *Social Work: A professional journal for the social worker*, *Anthropology Southern Africa* (previously called the *South African Journal of Ethnology*) and the journal *Agenda* were also included in the literature search, they provided limited results. Electronic resources such as *SA E Publications* and *South African Studies* were included in my literature search as they mostly encompass unpublished master's theses and doctoral dissertations completed in South Africa.

Lastly, it was also necessary to ask whether more therapeutically oriented literature in South Africa would provide important information on intimate heterosexual relationships. Due to a lack of more appropriate journals, the above-mentioned journals were again consulted, while specifically searching for therapeutic literature regarding research on intimate relationships. Additionally, two prominent South African organisations contributing to the development of marital and family therapy were consulted: the *South African Association of Marital and Family Therapy* (SAAMFT) and the *Family and Marriage Society of South Africa* (FAMSA).

The *South African Association of Marital and Family Therapy* (originally called the *South African Institute of Marital and Family Therapy*) was established in 1981 at the First International Conference of Marital and Family Therapy, held in Durban. It constituted an association of groups interested in furthering family therapy through teaching, establishing standards, and organising family therapy conferences as well as national publications. The available conferences and national publications were included in this literature search.

FAMSA, a well-established, non-profitable South African organisation, has been developing human potential by counselling, education, training and social development programmes for South Africans who require help with relationship issues. This organisation focuses on areas such as violence and trauma, HIV/AIDS, abusive relationships, poverty and relationship breakdown. A telephonic conversation with the Clinical Manager of FAMSA (D. van Staden, personal communication, October 10, 2005) was conducted to inquire whether he was aware of any additional available therapeutic research on intimate relationships.

2.2 Organisation of literature

In my attempt to make sense of the literature obtained, I decided to utilise tables to clarify the use of various relationship terms. Two tables (see Appendixes A and B) were drawn up to provide an overview of the terms used when talking about relationships. Appendix A reflects the international literature and Appendix B the literature from South African studies. These two tables

indicate: the terms used; the authors who made use of them; where applicable, the participants identified; other terms used to describe the specific relationship; as well as the topic of study.

The terms used were taken from the titles of the articles. It was important to identify, where applicable, the participants that were used in these studies, as the initial term used to describe relationships was not always clearly defined. By attending to the inclusion criteria researchers used for selecting participants I could gain a better understanding of the terms used to describe the relationships. For example, Gilbertson, Dindia and Allen (1998) used the term *relationships* in the title of their relationship research. Initially it was not clear what was meant by this term but when the participants were taken into consideration it became clear that the authors were referring to *partners from married or cohabiting couples*. By looking at the term *relationship* and then adding the information provided by the participants it became clear that this author was referring to *marital relationships* as well as *cohabiting relationships*.

Other terms that the authors utilised in their articles (other than the ones they used in their titles), were also included in the appendixes. For example, Fincham, Paleari and Regalia (2002) used the term *marriage* in their title, but they also used the term *intimate relationships* in the text of their article, referring to the marital relationship. The two terms *marriage* and *intimate relationships* were used interchangeably in this article. This provides valuable information about the variety of terms used in relationship research.

Lastly, I identified the topics of study. This provided me with additional information regarding the context within which the terms were being studied. Ruvolo (1998) used the term *couples* to refer to the specific relationship being studied, but the topic provided much more information regarding the concept of study, namely *Marital Well-Being and General Happiness of Newlywed Couples*. Appendixes A and B describe the relationship terms most frequently used (in the order from the most utilised terms to the less utilised terms). In addition to the most utilised terms, the articles were also organised chronologically (most recent research last). Those terms that were only used once were categorised according to the publication dates.

The information obtained and the use of tables assisted me in gaining a more comprehensive understanding regarding the terms used in international as well as South African relationship research. The terms used to describe the relationships, as well as the types of relationships studied, were therefore more accessible and clear. I will continue my review by firstly highlighting and commenting on the most salient aspects of relationship terms used within international

relationship research, and then continue my discussion by referring to the South African trends regarding term use.

2.3 Which relationships are international relationship researchers studying?

When I looked at the variety of terms used to describe relationships, it seemed as if international researchers are studying many different types of relationships. Although terms are usually helpful in organising and articulating research phenomena, the terms used in this field appear to be of a diverse nature. Some of the terms are clearly defined (e.g. marriage), others are only vaguely defined (e.g. interpersonal relationships), and some are not defined at all (e.g. personal relationships). By clarifying the terms, I intend to determine whether different terms are used to differentiate between different types of relationships, or whether different terms are used to refer to the same types of relationships. I now continue my discussion by referring to the most prominent terms and their definitions used within international relationship research.

The term *marriage* is widely used in many international studies. All the available literature on marriage to date refers to a husband-wife relationship where the couple is legally married and living together (e.g. Fincham & Beach, 1999; Hinchliff & Gott 2004; Larson, Hammond & Harper, 1998). This term can therefore be easily understood without much explanation and without any confusion. It is mostly understood as a legal contractual agreement between a man and a woman entering into or being in a marital relationship. Terms like married couples, married spouses, marital dyads and spouses are used interchangeably and all of them refer to the above-mentioned husband-wife relationship. Authors also distinguish between early years of marriage, and longer-term or established marriages (e.g. Beach, Katz & Sooyen, 2003; Doucet & Aseltine, 2003; Fincham, Paleari & Regalia, 2002; Frye & Karney, 2004; Hinchliff & Gott, 2004; Kilpatrick, Bassinette & Rusbult, 2002; Ruvolo, 1998; Sanford, 2005).

In the United States, during the early 1980s, marriage was an important topic in psychology. Researchers were concerned about the escalating divorce rate as it affected people's quality of life. Many distressed couples demanded help from therapeutic services and more individuals sought help for marital problems than for any other single problem (O'Leary & Smith, 1991). Therefore, most relationship research has been conducted within the context of the marital-relationship and it is often assumed that relationship research refers to research on marriage.

However, some relationship research includes relationships other than marriage. *Close relationships* is a term that describe these types of relationships. Kelley et al. (quoted in Clark &

Reis, 1988) defined a *close relationship* as follows: “if two people’s behaviours, emotions, and thoughts are mutually and causally interconnected, the people are interdependent and a relationship exists. A relationship is defined as close to the extent that it endures and involves strong, frequent, and diverse causal interconnections.” Other terms used to describe *close relationships* range from casual sex and falling in love, to a serious relationship, as well as marriage (Buunk, Dijkstra, Fetchenhauer & Kernick, 2002). Hassebrauck and Fehr (2002) refer to partners involved in a close romantic relationship, cohabiting or married partners, while Frei and Shaver (2002) include the term romantic relationships and marital relationship in their understanding of close relationships.

It is thus evident that the term *close relationship* refers to two people who are interconnected and interdependent to one another, but this type of relationship can range from just having casual sex or falling in love to a cohabiting relationship, or even marriage. It is therefore clear that the term *close relationships* includes a wide variety of relationships. Although authors do not explicitly refer to close relationships as involving sexual interaction, the literature does seem to imply that most *close relationships* do include some form of sexual interaction.

Another term that refers to relationships other than, but also including, marriage is *romantic relationships*. Aune and Wong (2002) define *romantic relationships* as various forms of relationships and they categorise it as follows: casual daters, steady daters, cohabitators, engaged couples as well as married couples. Kachadourian, Fincham and Davila (2004) include dating relationships as well as marital relationships in their definition of romantic relationships. The term *romantic relationships* can refer to anything from casual dating to a marital relationship, in other words, any type of relationship that contains an affectionate element between partners. As with the term *close relationships*, the term *romantic relationships* also includes various definitions of relationships.

The variety of terms used to describe different types of relationships creates much confusion as to what is actually meant by a specific term. Many other terms are used (other than marriage, close relationships and romantic relationships), for example: *couples*, *dating couples*, *dating relationships*, *romantic partners* and *intimate relationships*. The terms *marriage* and *dating couples* are the only terms that are mutually exclusive. In other words, the term *marriage* excludes dating relationships, and the term *dating relationships* excludes marital relationships (e.g. Byers, Demmons & Lawrence, 1998; Flora & Segrin, 2000; Ickes, Dugosh, Simpson & Wilson, 2003).

International relationship researchers are studying a variety of relationships, ranging from casual sexual relationships to committed relationships and marriage. All the terms referred to in Appendix A, except marriage and dating couples, refer to many different types of relationships. In conclusion, international relationship researchers use different terms to refer to different types of relationships (e.g. marriage and dating couples). In addition, they also use different terms to refer to the same type of relationship (e.g. marriage and romantic couples).

2.4 Which relationships are South African relationship researchers studying?

The amount of relationship literature from South African studies cannot be compared to international literature, as South African relationship research is still in its early years of development. Despite this, the most widely used term within South African relationship research, as with international relationship research, is the term *marriage*. Marriage is defined as the union of a man and woman as husband and wife. Through the legal, religious and social processes attached to marriage, the couple is formally recognised as man and wife in their community. As a result of the marriage, each partner gets certain rights and accepts certain duties towards the other person. This definition refers to South African *civil marriages* that are legally recognised within the country. There are legal protections and legal limitations on civil marriages, for example, the process that you need to go through to get married and how property is shared between married partners (Cape Gateway, 2004). Most South African relationship researchers who are researching the marital relationship focus on civil marriages within the South African context (e.g. Leibowitz, 1983; Lourens, 2000; Maseme, 2003; Rabe 2001; Rasher, 1996; Steyn, 1996).

However, another type of legal marriage is identified in South Africa, namely *customary marriages*. Customary marriages, a type of marriage that international relationship researchers are not concerned with, is a specific type of marriage found within the South African context. According to the South African Department of Home Affairs, a *customary marriage* is a marriage negotiated, celebrated or concluded according to any of the systems of indigenous African customary law which exist in South Africa. No restriction exists on the number of customary marriages that a husband may enter into, and hence it implies multiple relationships. This does not include marriages concluded in accordance with Hindu, Muslim or other religious rites. The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No. 120 of 1998) came into operation on 15 November 2000. Prior to this date, customary marriages were not considered legal in South Africa (South African Department of Home Affairs, 2005). Pond (1998) studied various reported forms of *African customary marriages*, for example bride-wealth marriages, sister-exchange

marriages, cross-cousin marriages, slave marriages, secondary marriages and ritual marriages. These marriages are described as conjugal relationships where multiple partners are allowed. A number of other studies have also been conducted focusing on African customary marriages (e.g. Bekker, 2001a; Bekker, 2001b; Jubber, 1994; Matjila, 1999; Van der Vliet, 1982; Whelpton & Vorster, 2001).

Another difference between international and South African research is that South African researchers often make use of the term *heterosexual relationships*. In my review of international research, in referring to romantic relationships between men and women, the term *heterosexual romantic relationships* was used only once (Baxter & Erbert, 1999) and *heterosexual dating couples* only twice (Barta & Kione, 2005; MacNeil & Byers, 2005). No South African studies clearly state the definition of the term *heterosexual relationships*. Some loosely define it as a husband-wife relationship and marriage (Cooper-Evans, 2001), while others define it as a male-female relationship (Shefer, 1996). Mkhonza (1999) specifically defined it as sexual relationships between men and women.

It is therefore clear that this term can be understood as some form of relationship between a man and a woman, but the precise meaning of the term is not clear. In addition, it appears as if this term is used in different ways and that it does not always refer to the same type of relationship. Modipa's (1998) understanding of heterosexual relationships is that of a premarital relationship, while Borton's (2002) understanding of the same term refers to married couples. Despite the clarity of a male-female relationship in the definition of heterosexual relationships, there exists much confusion as to how the term is used. Many researchers do not reflect critically on the terms they use to describe a type of relationship. In short, the term heterosexual relationships does not help researchers to develop a clear understanding as to what type of relationship is being studied, as it can refer to many types of relationships.

The term *intimate relationships* is often used in South African research and, as with the term heterosexual relationships, it is not clear what is meant when it is used. No authors give a sound definition of the term *intimate relationships*. It is almost as if the authors assume the reader to have a clear understanding of the term, without any explanation. It is evident that this term is used without much contemplation or reflection.

However, by looking at the participants, it becomes clear that most of these studies refer to male-female relationships, whether they are involved in a sexual relationship or not. Kubeka's (2003) understanding of intimate relationship is related to teenage relationships between boyfriends and

girlfriends. When Holmes (1988) utilises this term, he specifically refers to sexual relationships, while Williamson (1999) only describes the term vaguely by using it interchangeably with the words heterosexual cohabiting relationships. It is unclear as to what exactly is meant by the term *intimate relationships*, and it is used in different ways.

Other terms used less frequently in South African research are terms such as *intimate partners* (e.g. Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman & Laubsher, 2004), *romantic relationships* (Bedell, 2000) and *dyadic relationships* (Pretorius, 1997). These terms do not add anything new to the current discussion, as they were undefined and used in an interchangeable fashion.

When South African relationship research is compared to international relationship research trends it seems as if some of the same terms are used, in addition to other terms. The only clear similarity is the term *marriage* (taking into consideration that South Africa also includes customary marriages in their conceptualisation of marriage). South African researchers also use a variety of terms, and yet there is no singular overarching concept or term that describes intimate heterosexual relationships.

2.5 Conceptual parameters of the current literature review

By highlighting the types of relationships studied, both internationally and within the South African context, the notion of the variety of terms used in relationship research was confirmed. I decided to focus my relationship research review on intimate male-female relationships or, in other words, intimate heterosexual relationships as defined in the introduction. I include both civil and customary marriages in South Africa as well as any other forms of intimate relationship, whether it is a dating relationship, a committed cohabiting relationship, or a relationship where the partners are engaged. The only exclusion criteria is relationship research concerned with gay or lesbian relationships, as this literature review focuses on the current status of South African intimate heterosexual relationships.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The objective of this part of the literature review is to provide an overview of the most frequently used theoretical frameworks used in relationship research. It does not provide a detailed description of all the theoretical frameworks used in the studies. Why is it considered important to include an overview of the theoretical frameworks in such a study and what is the significance thereof? An understanding of the most frequently used theoretical frameworks will provide the

reader with an overview of those frameworks that are guiding current research on intimate heterosexual relationships. It will also contribute to an understanding of what relationship researchers measure, and what statistical relationships they look for.

The diversity of relationship research is accentuated by the variety of theoretical orientations employed. When a certain phenomenon is studied, researchers are likely to emphasise different factors and to study different effects. Reis and Rusbult (2004) are of the opinion that the variety of theoretical orientations on interactions and relationships is one of the great strengths of the relationship research field. Diversity tends to produce rich and comprehensive understandings of human behaviour.

In my process of identifying the prominent theoretical frameworks and orientations used in international and South African relationship research, I compiled two more tables (see Appendixes C and D). The same articles, theses and dissertations were used as those used to clarify concept usage (see Appendixes A and B) in relationship research.

Appendix C reflects the international studies' theoretical orientations. In an attempt to clarify the international theoretical frameworks most frequently to less frequently used, I identified the theoretical orientation, the authors, as well as the topic of study. Appendix D provides a summary of the theoretical orientations used in South African relationship research. This information was organised in the same way as Appendix C. An overview of the most frequently used theoretical orientations in international as well as South African literature will now be discussed.

3.1 Prominent international theoretical orientations

International researchers are using a broad range of theoretical orientations. Among the more frequently used are the attachment theory, social learning theory, and interdependence theory. I will continue my discussion by providing an overview of these prominent international theoretical orientations and briefly refer to the less frequently used theoretical orientations.

3.1.1 *Attachment theory*

Some relationship researchers adopt an attachment orientation, emphasising the role of our genetic inheritance (e.g. Alonso-Arbiol, Shaver & Yáñez, 2002) as well as childhood experiences (e.g. Zhang & Hazan, 2002). According to attachment theory, humans are born with genetically based tendencies to regulate attachment and caregiving. The manner in which the interactions

unfold between the caregiver and the infant are thought to have profound effects on the child's 'mental models of relationships' (Reis & Rusbult, 2004). The developing 'mental models' of the child are called *internal working models of attachment* and this forms the basis of early attachment experiences with primary caregivers (Bowlby, 1969). Some children have adult caregivers who are appropriately responsive to their needs and this makes the child feel safe and secure, other children's caregivers are less responsive or even unresponsive to their needs, and these children develop distorted expectations about how others will respond to them later in life (Reis & Rusbult, 2004).

Therefore, working models of attachment contains information on key aspects of attachment relationships and this internalised information constitutes a major component of a person's attachment style (e.g. secure, avoidant, or anxious-ambivalent). Early experiences with primary caregivers thus have a huge influence on the way people conduct their close relationships (Collins & Read, La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman & Deci, quoted in Rowe & Carnelley, 2003). This orientation is helpful in explaining why some people are secure and trusting in close relationships whereas others tend to be worried and unsure about their partners (Reis & Rusbult, 2004).

In recent years, international relationship research has been advanced by research based on attachment principles. Hazan and Shaver (quoted in Kachadourian, Fincham & Davila, 2004) were the first researchers who examined attachment within the context of adult romantic relationships, and since then researchers have explored various aspects of adult close relationships. Some research to date has focused primarily on how working models of attachment influence the outcome of a person perception; in other words, whether the self and others, are viewed positively or negatively (e.g. Kachadourian, Fincham & Davila, 2004; Meyer & Landsberger, 2002). Others have studied the effects of adult attachment processes that have been related to various relationship-oriented behaviours, including beliefs and attitudes toward romantic love, partner pairing and relationship stability over time, relationship satisfaction and commitment, jealousy, relationship trust, as well as sexual behaviour (Bogart & Sadava, 2002; Zhang & Hazan, 2002). The attachment orientation has also been used to develop measuring instruments, such as the Marital Attachment Interview (Dickstein, Seifer, St Ander & Schiller, 2001).

Despite differences in how attachment is measured, research has validated adult attachment by linking it to many features of intimate heterosexual relationships (e.g. marital satisfaction and self-disclosure). Most researchers to date have been focused on attachment styles in intimate relationships (e.g. Alonso-Arbiol, Shaver & Yáñez, 2002; Davila & Bradbury, 2001; Gentzler &

Kerns, 2004; Schachner & Shaver, 2004). When relationships are viewed from the perspective of attachment styles (secure, insecure, anxious, avoidant and ambivalent), secure attachment is generally related to positive relationship outcomes, whereas insecure attachment is related to less-adaptive relationship outcomes. Although this type of research contributes to the understanding of various attachment styles to aspects of relationships it does not tell us anything about relationship processes (which is often related to an individual's internal working of models of the self and others).

An important aspect of attachment theory is *internal working models of the self and of others*. During the 1980s and 1990s attachment research almost exclusively focused on internal working models, but the focus was on the determinants of personality and it largely neglected the study of current attachment relationships and behaviour (Kobak, 1994). The internal working modelling of the self and of others in relationships regulates an individual's relationship adaptation through interpretive or attributional processes. These processes reflect not only a person's perception of reality but also create reality for the individual himself or herself and the relationship partner as well. A process oriented approach to working models therefore focuses on how the working models are constructed, developed and revised through participation in attachment relationships. Zhang and Hazan (2002) commented on the fact that attachment research has focused primarily on how working models of attachment influence the outcome of a person perception, but less is known about the processes by which individuals form such views. Although adult attachment processes have been related to numerous relationship-orientated behaviours, including beliefs and attitudes toward romantic love (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002); it remains a useful and fruitful aspect of attachment research that has by no means been exhausted.

Since the late 1980s attachment theory started playing an important role in researching relationships, more specifically adult intimate relationships. At first the focus was on attachment styles (e.g. secure, anxious, avoidant, ambivalent attachment styles). Researchers were interested in how these styles related to aspects of intimate relationships, such as commitment and relationship satisfaction (e.g. Davila & Bradbury, 2001). They then started to incorporate the study of internal working models into their research and more was learned about the interpretations or attributes people hold of their relationships (e.g. Kobak, 1994). Despite these contributions to relationship research, attachment theory should offer another important focus, namely the process by which individuals form views of their partners, as well as the processes in changing or adjusting their views of their partners (Johnson & Whiffen, 2003). Although some researchers (e.g. Bogaert & Sadava, 2002) have acknowledged this limitation, little has been done to address this important aspect of relationship research.

3.1.2 Social learning theory

According to Gottman (1998), the first question marital researchers ask is “what makes some marriages happy and others miserable?” They believed that an adequate theoretical background would be provided by the social learning theory. The social learning orientation addresses how individuals learn new responses that are appropriate in various social situations. Conditioning is one of the primary processes through which social learning occurs. Through this process, one acquires new responses through reinforcement (that is, the association of rewards and punishments with particular behaviours), and imitation (by which one observes the reinforcement elicited by another person’s behaviour) (Bandura & Taylor, quoted in Kaplan, 2000).

It is important to note that the roots of the social learning orientation lie with the social exchange theory of Thibault and Kelly (1959). The social exchange orientation is built on a combination of behaviourism and elementary economics. In other words, human behaviour is regarded as a function of payoffs or rewards. Rewards refer to the benefits exchanged in social relationships and are defined as any pleasure, satisfaction and gratification (Busboom, Collins, Givertz & Levin, 2002).

Social learning theory incorporates a number of behavioural and cognitive constructs and its core contribution to the understanding of marriage is that marital satisfaction reflects the extent to which the partners’ behaviour is rewarding rather than punishing (Fincham & Beach, 1999; O’Leary & Smith, 1991). In addition, research on negativity and affectional expression has provided convincing support for the social learning theory’s basic principle that punishing behaviours are associated with marital dissatisfaction (Caughlin & Huston, 2002).

Social learning theory is widely viewed as a framework informing marital research (Fincham & Beach, 1999). It is viewed as helpful in understanding marital relationships as it removes the focus from the individuals involved in the relationship and places them within their environmental context. The partners’ behaviours are therefore not attributed to individual traits, personality structure or the unconscious, but rather by a detailed examination of the environmental stimuli that impose on each of the partners (Christensen, 1983).

Despite this valuable aspect of the social learning orientation, some researchers (including those within the social learning theory tradition) have begun to incorporate other theories to explain relationship phenomena. Caughlin and Huston (2002) refer to researchers that have included

systems theory in their theoretical framework as it provides a more comprehensive account for their topic of study. Other researchers refer to social learning theory in their literature overview, but conclude that the theory does not adequately explain their research phenomena and therefore choose to utilise another theoretical framework (Kurdek, 2003b).

3.1.3 *Interdependence theory*

Some relationship researchers adopt an interdependence orientation. Rather than focusing on the people themselves, these researchers emphasise the nature of the relationship between people (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). According to this orientation, in order to understand interactions and relationships, we must first understand the nature of the interdependence between people. For example, does each person affect the other's well-being, how much power does each have over the other; do they have similar interactional needs? The nature of the interdependence therefore defines what the two are likely to experience in interaction, which norms will guide their interaction and how the nature of their experiences will be shaped (Reis & Rusbult, 2004).

The interdependence theory provides a comprehensive account of interaction as well as relationships by including both intrapersonal and interpersonal processes in relationships. It explains how interaction is shaped by broader considerations such as long-term goals and concerns for a partner's welfare. In addition, it emphasises adaptations to repeatedly encountered interdependence patterns, as well as adaptations in interpersonal dispositions, relationship-specific motives and social norms (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). It has been used to explain the role of social cognition in social interaction (Holmes, 2002) as well as the impact of empathic accuracy on the role of accommodating behaviour (Kilpatrick, Bissonette & Rusbult, 2002). It has also been successful used to explain relational aspects such as commitment, trust, conflict and willingness to sacrifice (Reis & Rusbult, 2004).

Although the interdependence theory offers a relatively comprehensive analysis of the interplay between interaction and relationships, some aspects of the theory call for further development. Interdependence theory is an abstract, comprehensive theory, which is rooted in, and extends, complex theories such as game theory, social exchange theory and social learning theory. Therefore, the theory may be regarded as a school of thought providing concepts, logic and tools for analysing, predicting and explaining interaction in relationships. When one considers this theory as a school of thought, it stands as an open invitation to new applications and novel operational definitions (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003).

Another aspect of the theory that calls for further development is the fact that topics have recently been added to the theory, such as information availability and situation selection. These extensions increase the challenge of understanding cognition, motivation and the dynamics of interaction and call for further theoretical and empirical thought and consideration (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003).

Several strengths of the theory are however noteworthy. The taxonomic characterisation of situations provides the field with a much-needed typology of interpersonal situations, and contributes to a comprehensive understanding of human interaction. An additional strength is the transformation concept of interdependence theory. This concept stands in contrast to prevailing models of rational self-interest, and provides a solution to the traditional person-situation problem in psychology (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). It is clear that the interdependence theory seems to serve as one of the few comprehensive analyses of cognition, motivation and behaviour in long-term relationships, and has much potential for integrating diverse fields such as close relationships, prosocial behaviour as well as intergroup behaviour (Holmes, 2002).

3.1.4 Less frequently used international orientations

Less frequently used theoretical orientations have also proven to be valuable in researching relationships. Some researchers adopt theories and perspectives from the psychodynamic perspective to study the marital relationship (O'Leary & Smith, 1991). Others use cognitive theories to investigate loneliness in relationships (Segrin, Powell, Givertz & Brackin, 2003) as well as relationship beliefs and quality (Goodwin & Gaines, 2004). Gottman (1998) reviewed views from cognitive psychology and psychophysiology as conceptual frameworks to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of relationships. Other less well-known theories are also utilised, for example the theoretical model of play (Aune & Wong, 2002), the soul-mate theory and work-it-out theory (Franiuk, Cohen & Pomerantz, 2002).

Within this variety of less frequently used theoretical orientations, different topics regarding intimate heterosexual relationships are being studied. Some researchers are investigating relationship processes (e.g. Gottman's study on the dynamics of relationships), while others are investigating key aspects of interaction and relationships, such as forgiveness (Fincham, Paleari & Regalia, 2002), depression (Segrin, Powell, Givertz & Brackin, 2003), perceptions of power in relationships (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005) and sexual satisfaction in couples (MacNeil & Byers, 2005). As mentioned previously, the variety of theoretical orientations is one of the great assets

of the relationship research field as it leads to multi-faceted, rich understandings of intimate heterosexual relationships.

3.2 Prominent South African theoretical orientations

Similar to international relationship research, South African researchers are also making use of a wide variety of theoretical orientations. Orientations more frequently used are social learning theory, cognitive behavioural theory and metatheoretical perspectives. However, the bulk of South African research has an atheoretical approach to research. I will continue my discussion by briefly referring to the atheoretical approach to research, the most frequently used theoretical orientations, and lastly by mentioning some of the less frequently used theories.

3.2.1 *Atheoretical approach to research*

The majority of South African studies have an atheoretical approach to research. Jubber (1994), for example, investigated intimate heterosexual relationships in Cape Town, South Africa. This study was not grounded within an explicit theoretical framework and can be characterised as descriptive research. Findings such as age at first love with someone of the opposite sex, number of boyfriends or girlfriends before marriage and initiative in romantic relationships were described. Other examples of atheoretical approaches to research, in other words, studies not drawing on the ideas of any specific theoretical framework, can be found in Appendix D.

3.2.2 *Social learning theory*

Currently, various South African researchers are drawing on the social learning orientation. For example, Greef and De Bruyne (2000) used it to study marital interaction and conflict management, and Kubeka (2003) employed the social learning theory to make sense of black teenagers' experiences and views of violence in their homes and intimate relationships. The basic premises of this orientation have already been discussed in the section on prominent international theoretical orientations.

3.2.3 *Cognitive behavioural theory*

South African studies such as those of De Beer (1997), Möller, Rabe and Nortje (2001) and Möller and Van der Merwe (1997) utilised Ellis' rational emotive behaviour theory as their theoretical framework of reference. According to Ellis (1986), the way in which people think, as

well as the content of their thoughts, exert a profound influence on their adjustment within a relationship. Irrational thinking, or dysfunctional cognition, is seen to affect adjustment negatively, while rational or functional cognitions are associated with better adjustment.

A universal phenomenon in relationships has to do with how partners in happy and unhappy relationships think about positive and negative actions of their partners. In a happy relationship, the negative behaviour of one partner tends to be perceived by the other partner as fleeting or situational. In unhappy relationships, however, the same behaviour is likely to be interpreted as stable and internal to the partner (Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997). If individuals change the way in which they think about their partner they will most likely feel differently about them and that may alter the way in which they behaviourally react to their partner (Walen, DiGiuseppe & Dryden, 1992).

3.2.4 Metatheoretical perspectives

Some South African relationship researchers have adopted a metatheoretical orientation in which a range of frameworks within postmodernism are utilised, including feminism, social constructivism and discourse theory. These frameworks are all based on specific assumptions about reality and knowledge, as they believe that reality is constructed through human activity and that knowledge is a human product that is socially and culturally constructed (Holt, 2002).

Various South African studies have been based on postmodern and social constructionist assumptions. Kottler and Long (1997) used these ideas to study sexual harassment and Minnaar (2003) concerned herself with men's talk about women and heterosexual relationships. In a qualitative study, embedded in a feminist discourse analytic metatheoretical framework, Shefer, Strebel and Foster (2000) focused on discourses of power and violence in students' talk on heterosexual negotiation. Boonzaier and De la Rey (2004) made use of a postmodern theoretical approach in their study of violence in relationships.

3.2.5 Less frequently used theoretical frameworks

Some of the studies have made use of less frequently used theoretical frameworks. Joffe (1999) for example, attempted to plot the evolution of the feminine and masculine by applying principles proposed by Freud, Klein, Lacan and Masters and Johnson; and Naude (1996) incorporated structural family therapy in his focus on the closeness-distance struggles between couples.

Rossouw (1993) selected logotherapy as the basis for the philosophical premise of his study – another less frequently used theoretical orientation.

4. WHOM ARE RELATIONSHIP RESEARCHERS STUDYING?

4.1 Whom are international relationship researchers studying?

The ages of the participants provide us with information about those *age groups* mostly studied and least studied. Participants in late adolescence and early adulthood are the age groups mostly studied (e.g. Busboom, Collins, Givertz & Levin, 2002; Hess, 2003; Zhang & Hazan, 2002), and participants in old age are the least studied (e.g. Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Schweinle, Ickes & Bernstein, 2002).

Various life stages of human development are embedded in the chosen age groups of the participants, and each of these stages concur with specific developmental and growth areas (Bee, 1996). Therefore, participants from different age groups will provide different information about the nature of their intimate relationship. If, for example, we study student populations' experiences of intimate relationships, the results will reflect specific views and experiences of late adolescents' or young adults' experiences concerning intimate relationships. However, if we study married couples that have been married for many years, a different experience of intimate relationships will be reflected. It is thus clear that researchers' understanding of a particular age group cannot be generalised to other age groups; for example, knowledge about young adults is not equivalent to knowledge about aged adults.

Also implicit in the age groups of the participants is the *duration of the relationships* studied. Most international studies focus on couples in the early years of their relationship (e.g. Fincham & Beach, 2002; Frye & Karney, 2004; Kilpatrick, Bissonnette & Rusbult, 2002; Ruvalo, 1998). Those couples involved in a relationship for 10 years or less seem to reflect researchers' understandings of "early years of the relationship" (e.g. Bellavia & Murray, 2003; Knobloch & Solomon, 2004; Lohmann, Arriage & Goodfriend, 2003). Topics such as constructive communication (Fincham & Beach, 2002), accommodating behaviour (Kilpatrick, Bissonnette & Rusbult, 2002), relationship satisfaction (Feeney, 1999) and general happiness (Ruvalo, 1998) are related to the study of participants in the early years of their relationships or marriages.

Although less often studied, international relationship researchers also seem interested in studying more established longer-term relationships (e.g. Kupperbusch, Levenson & Ebling,

2003; Meyers & Landsberger, 2002). “Longer-term relationships” are referred to as those relationships that have existed for more than 10 years (e.g. Sanford, 2003a) or, in some cases, even more than 20 years (e.g. Fincham, Paleari & Regalia, 2002; Hinchliff & Gott, 2004). The topics of study differ: from studying participants in their early years of the relationships, and include, for example, sexual health as a quality-of-life issue (Hinchliff & Gott, 2004), to forgiveness in long-term marriages.

It is evident that international relationship researchers are mostly concerned with studying people in the early years of their relationships. The formation of a new relationship (whether dating, cohabiting or married relationship) brings profound changes to many aspects of people’s lives, such as acquiring new roles (e.g. husband/wife) or providing social support for your partner (Bee, 1996). Perhaps this explains why there is a greater tendency to study relationships in the early years, as it involves various adjustments and challenges for both partners involved. It is also possible that the chosen participants are related to a specific topic of interest, such as communication in early marriage, or the sexual interaction of couples in longer-term relationships. The topic of study could therefore influence the couples chosen to take part in the studies (e.g. couples married for a short duration or couples married for a longer duration). Whatever the reason, a clear description of the relationship duration of couples provides researchers with a better understanding of the relationships being studied, as they are then able to place these relationships within a specific durational context.

Additional to the topic of relationship duration is the presence or absence of *children* in a relationship. Roughly, 90 percent of adults in the United States will eventually become parents in their 20s or 30s. Bringing children into the intimate relationship equation adds new dimensions to the relationship and, for most people, the arrival of the first child brings deep satisfaction and an enhanced feeling of self-worth (Bee, 1996). Despite the impact that children have on an intimate relationship, those studies that do state the presence of children in the relationship being studied are in the minority (e.g. Beach, Katz, Sooyeon & Brody, 2003; Feeney, 2002; Schweinle, Ickes & Bernstein, 2002). It is not clear whether researchers omit to mention the presence of children in intimate relationships or whether there are no children present in the relationships being studied. The first probability is greater than the latter as most couples who do get married have children at some point in their relationship (Bee, 1996). The possibility also exists that some relationship researchers do not refer to the presence or absence of children as they only focus on the intimate relationship being studied. In other words, it is possible that relationship researchers study intimate relationships without constructing it within the broader family system (Baron & Byrne, 1994).

Most of the international studies only include *one partner* of an intimate relationship (e.g. Meyers & Landsberger, 2002; Schweinle, Ickes & Bernstein, 2002; Tolmacz, 2004). In other words, most participants used in international relationship research are *individual participants* involved in intimate heterosexual relationships. Of these individual participants, most of them are American undergraduate college or university students – an easily accessible and convenient sample to include in relationship research (e.g. Alonso-Arbiol, Shaver & Yáñez, 2002; Davila, Steinberg, Kachadourian, Cobb & Fincham, 2004; Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Rowe & Carnelley, 2003; Schachner & Shaver, 2004).

International studies that include *both partners* of the relationship are in the minority (e.g. Frye & Karney, 2004; Ridley, Wilhelm & Suzra, 2001; Sahlstein, 2004). Some of these studies specifically focus on the *interaction* between both partners of the couple (e.g. Alberts, Yoshimura, Rabby & Loschiavo, 2005; Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005; Gilbertson, Dindia & Allen, 1998; Sanford, 2003a; Schütz, 1999). Other studies focus on the *individual reports* of the partners by interviewing them individually, or by asking them to fill out questionnaires on their experiences of their partner and their relationship (e.g. Franks, Wendorf, Gonzalez & Ketterer, 2004; Neff & Harter, 2002). Whether they are interviewed individually or observed while interacting, results of these studies make a significant contribution to relationship research. They acknowledge the importance of representing both partners of the couple in the studies, and it could be argued that a more accurate portrayal of the relationships is obtained.

The majority of studies focusing on individual participants include more females than males. This skewed *male-female ratio* is reflected by various studies, such as a study done by Gentzler and Kerns (2004) where the participants were made up of 202 females and 126 males. There are many other examples in the literature that demonstrate this skewed male-female ratio (e.g. Aune & Wong, 2002; Fincham, Pleari & Regalia, 2002; Schachner & Shaver, 2004; Sümer & Cozzarelli, 2004; Weigel, Bennett & Ballard-Reisch, 2003). The skewed male-female ratio is specifically prominent in psychology student samples. A possible explanation could be the fact that more females enrol for psychology courses than males, and therefore more females than males are recruited in the studies where extra course credits are provided. Despite this possible explanation, many other participants (mostly females) are not college or university students. Why then is there still an obvious disparity in male-female representation in these studies? One possibility is that females are much more responsive to invitations to participate in research studies; another might be that they are more willing to talk openly about their intimate relationships. Although the reason is not clear, researchers still need to be aware of this skewed

male-female ratio. If most information we have about intimate heterosexual relationships comes from females, we might overlook males' views and experiences of intimate relationships. It is therefore suggested that relationship researchers include as many males as females in their studies in order to provide a representative account of intimate heterosexual relationships.

The last important theme that needs to be considered is the *race group* or *culture* of the participants. Most of the available literature does not mention the race group of the participants. Although some studies do specify participants such as "African American couples" and "white couples" (Ruvolo, 1998), "heterosexual Caucasian couples" (Alonso-Arbiol, Shaver & Yáñez, 2002) and "interethnic/interracial couples", little information is provided about the race or culture of the participants. Questions are therefore raised about the representation of the various population groups in international intimate heterosexual relationship studies.

It is evident from the above discussion that further research must carefully consider neglected research populations. This can be done by taking into account all the above-mentioned factors: age groups, duration of the relationship, the presence of children, including one or both partners, equal male and female representation, and representation of diverse population groups.

4.2 Whom are South African relationship researchers studying?

The *age groups* mostly studied are early and middle adulthood (e.g. De Beer, 1997; Greef & Malherbe, 2001; Holmes, 1988; Leibowitz, 1983; Lourens, 2000; Matjila, 1999; Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997; Pretorius, 1997; Shefer & Strebel, 2001; Williamson, 1999). Some studies focused on adolescent intimate relationships (e.g. Heyns, 1989; Kubeka, 2003; Swart, Stevens & Ricardo, 2002), but only one study focused on participants of older age (Sonik, 1997).

What does the *duration of the researched relationships* tell us about the intimate heterosexual relationships being studied in South Africa? On average, most participants involved in the studies have been married for 10 years or longer (e.g. De Beer, 1997; Greef & De Bruyne, 2000; Greef & Malherbe, 2001; 2000; Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997; Sonik, 1997; Williamson, 1999), or are involved in a so-called "long-term relationship" (Borton, 2002). Newly married couples or couples in the early years of their relationship were the least studied (e.g. Pienaar, 1991; Smith, 1994).

Contradictory to international research, it seems as if South African relationship researchers are mostly concerned with studying longer-term relationships. Although some studies choose to focus on newly married couples and their adjustment to married life, they are in the minority.

Researchers' main focus seems to be on studying marital satisfaction (e.g. Greef & De Bruyne, 2000; Sonik, 1997), marital conflict (e.g. Möller, Rabe & Nortje, 2001), and marriage stability (e.g. Leibowitz, 1983) in longer-term relationships, while less focus is placed on marital adjustment (e.g. Smith, 1994) and marital needs (e.g. Pienaar, 1991) of newly-married couples.

Despite the fact that children have a critical influence on their parent's relationship, few South African relationship researchers mention whether their participants have *children* or not. Those studies that do indicate the presence or absence of children in the relationships mostly report the presence of an average of two children (De Beer, 1997; Greef & Malherbe, 2001; Leibowitz, 1983). Other studies do mention that some couples are childless (Greef & Malherbe, 2001; Pienaar, 1991).

As with international research, South African relationship research mostly includes *individual participants* rather than *both partners* in their studies. In other words, the research participants are usually interviewed individually, or they are asked to fill out individual questionnaires about their experiences of their relationships and partners (e.g. Abraham, Jewkes, Hoffman & Laubsher, 2004; Crissopoulos, 1998; Sonik, 1997). Few studies focus on researching the interaction between the couple (e.g. Borton, 2002; Theron, 1982) and it is clear that relationship knowledge is mostly composed of individual's accounts of their relationships and intimate partners.

The representation of *males and females* in the South African sample populations is another important factor to consider when reviewing relationship research. Unlike international research, male participants were well represented in the South African studies on relationships. In some cases the male participants were the majority, when compared to the female participants (e.g. Holmes, 1988; Rabe, 2001; Sonik, 1997), and some studies only focused on the experiences of males regarding intimate heterosexual relationships (e.g. Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman & Laubsher, 2004; Heyns, 1989; Widrich & Ortlepp, 1994). The tendency to include more, or only, male participants in some studies could be explained by the topics of study, such as the mediating role of job satisfaction in the work stress-marital interaction relationship (Widrich & Ortlepp, 1994). Although women have increasingly joined the labour market in the last few years, many men are still the main breadwinners, which could explain why it is the men that are mostly included in these studies.

Another research topic that is currently receiving much attention, and which influences researchers' selection of participants, is intimate partner violence. For more than three decades researchers have paid attention to the experiences of women in abusive relationships, and less

so of the men's experiences in these relationships. Some South African studies focused specifically on the experiences of abused and battered women in their intimate relationships (e.g. Adams, 1987; Callaghan, 1995) and these women were mostly interviewed without their husbands, in order to protect them from further abuse. Literature on the perpetrators and the victims of violence seems to be developing independently from each other and commonly provides only one-sided accounts – mostly from victims and less often from perpetrators. Yet, an important study, conducted by Boonzaier and De la Rey (2004), specifically reports on an ongoing research project that aims to explore how both partners in a violent heterosexual relationship understand and attach meanings to their interviews. However, some studies did include more female than male participants in their research. As in the case of international research, this was more prominent in undergraduate psychology student samples (e.g. Pretorius, 1997; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000).

It is also important to consider the *diversity of the South African population*. In this regard, factors such as race, socio-economic status, culture, religion and demographics should be considered. These factors all have an influence on how people construct their intimate heterosexual relationships. For example, each culture has its own way of viewing the world as well as being in the world, therefore influencing their experiences of intimate relationships (Helman quoted in Swartz, 1998). A critical analysis of the South African research on intimate heterosexual relationships also needs to consider the race of the participants included in the studies. Shefer and Foster (2001) highlight that although the current use of the population categories created by the former apartheid government are contested and controversial, they still have salience within the present South African context. It could be argued that acknowledging that these categories have been important in bringing inequalities about and continue doing so, is important in addressing these inequalities.

Although most South African research studies include White participants (e.g. Borton, 2002; Callaghan, 1995; De Waal, 1991; Holmes, 1988), many also include other participants such as Africans, Coloureds (Lourens, 2000; Williamson, 1999), and Indians (Williamson, 1999). Despite the fact that the majority of the South African population comprises black people (Statistics South Africa, 2005), this population group is least represented in South African relationship research (e.g. Dunkle, Jewkes, Brown, Gray, McIntyre & Harlow, 2004; Jubber, 1994; Kubeka, 2003; Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000).

Other than their race, the socio-economic status of participants also influences their experience of their intimate relationships. Most studies that do refer to participants' socio-economic status

include participants that are described as middle-class and living in urban areas of South Africa (e.g., Borton, 2002; Callaghan, 1995; De Beer, 1997; Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997; Steyn, 1996; Widrich & Ortlepp, 1994). Although not clearly stated, some authors imply that the participants included in their studies are South Africans from a lower socio-economic status and living in rural areas of South Africa (e.g. Crissopoulos, 1998; Dunkle, Jewkes, Brown, Gray, McIntyre, & Harlow, 2004; Kubeka, 2003; Van der Vliet, 1982). Few studies refer to the religion of participants.

5. WHAT RESEARCH METHODS DO RELATIONSHIP RESEARCHERS USE?

The aim of this part of the literature review is to provide an overview of the research methods employed by relationship researchers. The terms “research” and “methods” are often used interchangeably but, strictly speaking, “research methods” refers to specific research techniques used to gather data (such as survey research methods or questionnaires). The choice of the research method is typically informed by a *research strategy* or a set of decisions about the research design and by beliefs about how the social world can be studied as well as how the validity of such knowledge established by such research might be assessed (Pope & Mays, 2000).

Researchers adopt one of two views of the world and their surroundings: that of a positivist or that of a relativist. A researcher’s knowledge can therefore be based on universal laws, or the “truth” (positivist view), or it can be based on how individuals perceive experiences and how they understand their world (relativist view) (Bailey, 1997). For many researchers, the choice of a particular method is inextricably linked to a particular theoretical perspective or set of explanatory concepts that provide a framework for thinking about research phenomena and inform their research (Pope & Mays, 2000). An understanding of a relationship researcher’s methodology will therefore enhance the reader’s understanding of the researcher’s worldviews as well as how the researcher generally views and understands intimate heterosexual relationships.

In order to provide a clear overview of those research methods employed by international and South African relationship researchers, I will firstly reflect on the research strategies most often employed, and secondly on the data gathering strategies used to obtain the necessary data for the various studies.

5.1 What research methods are international relationship researchers using?

5.1.1 *Quantitative versus qualitative research strategies*

According to DePoy and Gitlin (1994), there are many valid scientific methodologies from which to examine various phenomena from multiple perspectives. These multiple *research strategies* have been categorised as either “experimental-type research” (also referred to as quantitative research) or “naturalistic inquiry” (qualitative research).

If a large number of social psychologists were asked to name the method of research they most prefer, probably most would reply with the term *quantitative research* (Baron & Byrne, 1994). Because of this tendency, many relationship researchers carrying out quantitative research do not refer to the research methodology used as it is almost assumed that the research will be of a quantitative nature. Those researchers using qualitative methods, however, usually state the type of research methodology employed.

Most international relationship studies employ a *quantitative research strategy* (e.g. Fincham, Harold & Gano-Phillips, 2000; Ickes, Dugosh, Simpson & Wilson, 2003; Richards, Butler & Gross, 2003; Segrin, Powell, Givertz & Brackin, 2003), of which some specifically use a correlational (e.g. Banse, 2004) or longitudinal research design (e.g. Previti & Amato, 2004). Topics associated with quantitative research strategies are, for example, the influence of communication quality, conflict types, attachment and time spent apart on marital satisfaction (e.g. Emmers-Sommer, 2004; Feeney, 2002; Gilbertson, Dindia & Allen, 1998; Holman & Jarvis, 2003). Marital quality is another popular subject of study and is related to aspects such as infidelity (Previti & Amato, 2004), depression (Segrin, Powell, Givertz & Brackin, 2003) and dysfunctional beliefs (Goodwin & Gaines, 2004).

It is clear that researchers employing quantitative research strategies are often concerned with the effect of, or the relationship between, various relationship aspects (such as communication, conflict, attachment or dysfunctional beliefs) and the quality of, or satisfaction in, these relationships. The aim of this research strategy is to determine the relationship between an independent and dependent variable in a population, and the goal of the researcher is to answer specific research questions by showing statistical evidence that the data may be addressed in a particular way (DePoy & Gitlin, 1994). As many variables as possible are controlled so that the effect of one variable on another can be investigated and the researcher attempts to manipulate a variable (the independent variable) in order to assess the effect on another variable (the

dependent variable). However, it is often difficult to control the whole environment and the complexity of this strategy lies in the fact that other factors can easily interfere during the research process. This can, in turn, influence the validity of the research findings. A last noteworthy disadvantage of these studies is that it is often difficult to translate the findings into realistic implications for practice, in this case intimate relationships between men and women (Drummond, 1996).

Many international researchers employ a *qualitative research strategy*, although it is less often employed than quantitative research strategies (e.g. Flora & Segrin, 2003; Hinchliff & Gott, 2004; Tashiro & Frazier, 2003). The topics studied are mostly related to participants' experiences of their relationship or the meaning they attach to their relationships, for example, the meaning people attach to their sexual relationships, or the experiences of individuals following disclosure after an affair (e.g. Hinchliff & Gott, 2004; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2005; Olson, Russell, Higgins-Kessler & Miller, 2002). It is clear that qualitative researchers try to interpret social phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Pope & Mays, 2000).

Misconceptions about the nature of qualitative methods and their uses have meant that qualitative research is often labelled as "unscientific". While it is true that qualitative research generally deals with talk or words rather than numbers, this does not mean that it is devoid of measurement, nor that it cannot be used to explain social phenomena (Bailey, 1997). Qualitative research is not only useful as the first stage of quantitative research; it also has a role to play in "validating" quantitative research or in providing a different perspective on the same social phenomena. The insights provided by qualitative research can help the researcher to interpret or understand quantitative data more fully. As well as complementing quantitative work, qualitative research may also be used quite independently to uncover social processes, or access areas of social life, which are not open or amendable to quantitative research (Pope & Mays, 2000).

5.1.2 Data gathering techniques

5.1.2.1 Survey method

Although international relationship researchers employ diverse measurement techniques, the most widely used technique seems to be the *survey method* of data gathering. The term *survey* refers to one or some combination of two procedures: *questionnaires* and *interviews*, and it is used to describe and summarise observations from a group of individuals (Bailey, 1997). The main purpose of surveys is to identify the problems in a preliminary study, to establish the size or

extent of a problem, to provide a baseline so that the effects of a subsequent intervention programme can be monitored, for the collection of data for audit purposes, and where the use of randomised control trials is impossible (Drummond, 1996). The methods of data collection in a survey include asking questions by face-to-face contact, by post or by telephone. In all of these approaches, the value of the research depends to a large extent on the quality of the questions being asked (DePoy & Gitlin, 1994).

Questionnaires

Most researchers employing the survey method use postal questionnaires to obtain the necessary data (e.g. Cole, 2001; MacNeil & Byers, 2005; Neff & Harter, 2002; Prager & Buhrmester, 1998; Ridley, Wilhelm & Suzra, 2001; Schachner & Shaver, 2004; Weger, 2005). Postal questionnaires advance the research process as they are relatively inexpensive, a large number of people can be approached, and information can be collected quickly. On the other hand, the response rate is often recognised as low. People may not feel that they have the opportunity to elaborate on topics about which they have strong feelings and it could mean that their answers are superficial and that their individuality is lost (Drummond, 1996).

Some of the questionnaires used by international relationship researchers are described as *self-report measures*. This method of data gathering requires the participants to describe themselves and their relationships by recording answers to questionnaire items with fixed response formats (Reis & Rusbult, 2004). It is used to examine partner's experiences of relational aspects such as dyadic adjustment, conflict, (Schweinle, Ickes & Bernstein, 2002), intimacy (Knobloch & Solomon, 2004), and relationship quality (Galliher, Welsch, Rostosky & Kawaguchi, 2004).

Some researchers, however, employ *self-report measures* as well as *other-report measures* (e.g., Saffrey, Bartholomew, Scharfe, Henderson & Koopman, 2003). In this case, participants are asked to report on both their own experiences as well as those experiences of their partners. This enables the researcher to compare two or more sources of data, which does not only verify the self-reports, but also informs the researchers about the influence of perspective on the interpretation of interpersonal behaviour (Reis & Rusbult, 2004).

Interviews

Although less used than questionnaires, many international researchers use interviews to obtain the necessary data. The most frequently used type of interview is the *in-depth interview* (e.g.

Erbert, 2000; Hinchliff & Gott, 2004; Olson, Russell, Higgins-Kessler & Miller, 2002). The format of in-depth interviews is less structured and may only cover one or two issues. These issues can however be covered in detail (Pope & Mays, 2000).

The advantage of such a technique is that the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate on his or her opinions and feelings. Although the researchers have freedom in each interview to conduct it as it develops, there is a tendency to concentrate on specific topics. A possible limitation is that the respective interviews turn out differently, which could complicate the coding process. However, some investigators argue that this is an advantage, because their objective is to understand the subject by trying to become immersed in the views of the individual respondents (Drummond, 1996).

5.1.2.2 Observation

The *observational technique* is the second most widely used international measurement technique (e.g. Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005; Sanford, 2003a). It mostly involves the use of video recording. This method is used to describe a behaviour or event where there are no constraints on what occurs. In other words, it is directly recorded in the specific setting in which it happens, and is observed in the environmental context within which it actually occurs. Information is therefore collected about what subjects actually do, as opposed to what we think they do or what they say they do (Pope & Mays, 2000).

The advantages of using video recordings are that the recordings can be carried out in the natural setting of the events being studied, there are few costs to be met (except for the cost of the video tape), they can be used with subjects who cannot be interviewed directly and non-verbal behaviours can be captured accurately for later analysis. This technique can however limit the study as the 'cameraman' needs time and experience to ensure that behaviours and events are shot from suitable angles, the preparation of the equipment and conditions for filming is time-consuming and analysing the filmed record can take a long time (Drummond, 1996).

5.1.2.3 Analysis of existing records

Although they are in the minority, some international researchers use the technique of *analysing existing records* (e.g. Stafford, Kline & Rankin, 2004). This method employs the use of existing data to test various hypotheses (Kaplan, 2000). The data include documents such as case conferences, letters, speeches, articles, books, diaries, notes, newsletters, newsletters or

previous surveys (Bailey, 1997). A major advantage of using existing records is that it is a relatively inexpensive method of collecting information and the data are already available. It is however possible that important information may be missing from notes, as records may be lost, misfiled or destroyed (Drummond, 1996).

5.2 What research methods are South African relationship researchers using?

5.2.1 *Quantitative versus qualitative research strategies*

Most South African relationship research studies made use of *qualitative research strategies* (e.g. Bedell, 2000; Callaghan, 1995; Crissopoulos, 1998; Griffith, 2000; Kottler and Long, 1997; Kubeka, 2003; Matjila, 1999; Mkhonza, 1999; Shefer and Foster, 2001; Smith, 1987; Steyn, 1996; Williamson, 1999). The research topics of these studies are all related to participants' experiences of various relationship phenomena, such as experiences of married life (Callaghan, 1995), of violence in intimate relationships (Kubeka, 2003), and of conflict in marriages (Matjila, 1999). Similar to the international qualitative research strategies, South African researchers mostly try to interpret relationship phenomena in terms of the meaning partners bring to them, as well as their individual experiences of these relationships.

The *quantitative research strategies* employed were in the minority (e.g. Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman & Laubsher, 2004; Dunkle, Jewkes, Brown, Gray, McIntyre & Harlow, 2004; Holmes, 1988; Jubber, 1994; Kruger, 1987; Möller, Rabe & Nortje, 2001; Pretorius, 1997). As with the international research, the research topics were concerned with the relationships between variables, such as stressful work events at the workplace and marital interaction (Kruger, 1987), irrational beliefs and marital adjustment (Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997) or marital conflict (Möller, Rabe & Nortje, 2001).

5.2.2 *Data gathering techniques*

5.2.2.1 Survey method

Interviews

Unlike international researchers, the survey method mostly employed by South African relationship researchers is the interview. Some researchers collected their data by means of unstructured dialogue, which took place during therapy sessions (e.g. Sonik, 1997), but most of

the studies used semi-structured in-depth interviews to gather the necessary data (e.g. Lourens, 2000; Matjila, 1999; Mkhonza, 1999; Van der Vliet, 1982). Considering the fact that most South African relationship researchers use a qualitative research strategy, it is methodologically appropriate to utilise in-depth interviews as a method of data gathering.

Questionnaires

Although some South African researchers use questionnaires to obtain data, it is not a primary method of data gathering. Postal questionnaires are sometimes used (e.g. Griffith, 2000; Wiggins, 1994), as well as questionnaires that specifically include self-report measures (e.g. Adams, 1987; Naude, 1996).

5.2.2.2 Observation

Although often used in international studies, the observational technique is not often used in South Africa. Leibowitz (1983) is one of the few South African relationship researchers who included an audiotape recording of conversations from each couple in his study. He reported that despite the naturalistic setting's advantages of immediacy and first-hand nature of the data yielded, audiotapes still leaves the possibility for paralinguistic contamination. Because of this, he also employed two questionnaires to increase the validity and reliability of the coding system used. This could explain South African researchers' reluctance to use the observational data gathering technique.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this part of the review is to provide a summary of the most important findings regarding the current state of research on intimate heterosexual relationships in South Africa. This will be done by highlighting the essence of each finding, discussing the implications thereof as well as suggesting recommendations for future research.

6.1 Concept clarification

6.1.1 *The need for concept clarification*

Similar to international research, South African relationship researchers use different terms to refer to different types of relationships (e.g. *married couples* versus *dating couples*). In addition,

they also use different terms to refer to the same type of relationship (e.g. *marriage* and *heterosexual relationship*). It has become clear that there is no singular overarching term describing *intimate heterosexual relationships*, and that various terms are used to describe these relationships.

Although day-to-day communication usually occurs through a system of vague and general agreements about the terms used (for example *marriage*, *life-partners*, *couples*), science aims at operationalising definitions within a specific context. In other words, fuzzy and imprecise notions or concepts are made more specific and precise to create an agreed-upon meaning for a specific concept for the purpose of research (Babbie, 2004). An important aspect of research is thus to provide clear and unambiguous definitions of key concepts (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

Despite this importance of conceptualisation, relationship researchers abroad as well as in South Africa conceptualise intimate heterosexual relationships in ambiguous ways. No agreed-upon concept exists that defines these relationships. In addition, those researchers that do use a specific concept to refer to the type of relationship studied, rarely clarify the concept used. It is however important to acknowledge the fact that relationships are not static, but dynamic, unique and ever changing. Therefore, the capturing of a relationship phenomena by means of a singular concept is a very challenging task. However, if relationship researchers want to further research on intimate heterosexual relationships they must start to recognise the existing need to clarify the concepts used in relationship research. It is recommended that they should firstly consider the use of more agreed-upon terms to describe intimate heterosexual relationships, and secondly clearly define the concepts used in relationship studies. By doing this, the conceptual integration of relationship research findings will be a more realistic and attainable task.

6.2 Theoretical frameworks

6.2.1 *Atheoretical inclination of South African relationship researchers*

Most of the South African studies have an atheoretical approach to research. In other words, the research is mostly of a descriptive nature and not grounded within an explicit theoretical framework.

The idea that a 'pure', neutral and atheoretical description can be achieved has however been much criticised by some researchers (Mason, 1996). Despite the critique, atheoretical, descriptive studies aim to describe research phenomena as accurately as possible, either through

narrative-type descriptions, classification or through measuring relationships (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004). However, the raw material cannot provide explanations and it is a researcher's task to sift, decode and make sense of the data (Pope & Mays, 2000). It is clear that such an approach to research is not necessarily an easier way of doing research, and that it requires a great deal of skill and knowledge in order to execute it efficiently. Clear and precise definitions are also needed before the researcher can embark on an atheoretical approach to researching intimate heterosexual relationships – a problem already highlighted in the previous section of concept clarification.

It would however be interesting to speculate about why the atheoretical approach to South African relationship research is so prominent. Most of the South African relationship research is found within the disciplines of sociology, psychology and social anthropology. The question that comes to mind is: to what extent are students from the above-mentioned fields exposed to relationship theories in their training? One possible explanation for the discipline of psychology is that most research is produced by postgraduate students, and that most of these students follow professional programmes in psychology. In professional training, students are usually exposed to appropriate models and theories for psychological interventions with *individuals*, and often less emphasis is placed on theoretical and therapeutic models for intervening in *relationships*. Training that do focus on couples and relationship interventions is mainly concerned with therapeutic models for intervention, and less so with theoretical conceptualisations of intimate relationships. It is thus possible that an atheoretical approach to research is followed due to the lack of sufficient exposure to appropriate theoretical frameworks relevant to intimate heterosexual relationships.

The problem with a descriptive, atheoretical approach to research is that it usually describes relationship phenomena, and does not develop theoretical models of relationship phenomena. Although research studies with an atheoretical approach describe various aspects of relationships, it is recommended that more research should draw on well-known relationship theories.

6.2.2 *Prominent theoretical frameworks that guide South African relationship research*

The theoretical frameworks currently used in South African relationship research are the social learning theory, cognitive behavioural theory and metatheoretical perspectives such as postmodernism, feminism and social constructivism.

There is usually more than one way to make sense of intimate heterosexual relationships and researchers often explain relationships in different ways. Underlying these different explanations, or theories, are *paradigms* – the frames of reference used to organise observations and reasoning (Babbie, 2004). Various paradigms have been developed to understand intimate relationships and a variety of views have been proposed. Each view offers its own insights, often ignoring some aspects of relationships that the others reveal. Ultimately, theories are not true or false, they are only more or less useful.

Throughout the development of relationship research, the social learning theory has proved to be one of the most useful theories in studying intimate heterosexual relationships. It has mostly been used in studying the marital relationship. However, when one looks at the latest research, few researchers draw on pure social learning theory, as it often views people from a limited perspective. This theory tends to exclude important aspects of human beings, such as individual traits, personality, cognition and emotion. Because of this shortcoming, researchers are starting to incorporate other theories in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of intimate heterosexual relationships.

Another well-utilised South African theory, the cognitive behavioural theory, provides valuable knowledge about relationships. The value of this theory lies in the notion of changing cognition. If partners' thinking can be altered, so can their emotions and their behaviour, and ultimately their relationship. According to this view, relationships are thus seen as dynamic and the possibility of altering a relationship for the better is always an option. Despite the value of this orientation, it limits the understanding of intimate relationships, as it does not acknowledge each partner's previous experiences and upbringing since childhood. Little attention is given to each partner's history, and how this impacts on the current intimate relationship.

South African relationship researchers are not only utilising the social learning and cognitive behaviour theories, but are also moving towards a tendency to make use of metatheoretical perspectives. The contribution of such an orientation is the acknowledgement of relativism. By adapting a postmodern metatheoretical orientation, one acknowledges that people are always interpreting their experienced reality through a pair of conceptual glasses. It is never possible to take the glasses off altogether and view the world as it "really is", with pure objectivity (Holt, 2002). Researchers are therefore interested in how people construct their relationships and how this perception influences their lived relationships. This implies that there is no absolute way of being in and experiencing intimate heterosexual relationships and it creates room for unique experiences of being a member of a couple. Considering the diversity of the South African

population, these perspectives to research might be less prescriptive and open to South African people's multi-faceted understandings and experiences of intimate heterosexual relationships. Further relationship research from metatheoretical perspectives should therefore be encouraged.

Two prominent international theories, the attachment theory and interdependence theory, are however scarcely represented in South African studies. It is therefore also recommended that South African relationship researchers must consider these theories in future relationship research. By drawing on international trends in relationship research, valuable comparisons or inferences can be made regarding the uniqueness of South African intimate heterosexual relationships.

6.2.3 *The use of less prominent theoretical frameworks*

South African relationship researchers seem to draw on a variety of less prominent theoretical frameworks. It is important to consider these frameworks, as the theoretical framework employed by researchers implies a specific way of viewing the world. The frequent use of these frameworks suggest that many relationship researchers are conducting research without placing it within the broader context of the current relationship-research trends. In other words, they are not concerned with current relationship research tendencies or theories, and employ any theoretical framework in their studies – relevant to intimate relationship research or not. On the one hand, this may be valuable as a variety of theoretical frameworks can add to rich descriptions and explanations of relationship phenomena. On the other hand, this diversity of theoretical frameworks may contribute to and aggravate the fractured nature of current relationship research.

The advantage of one theoretical framework is that researchers would be more likely to collaborate and consolidate their research findings – subsequently producing more thorough and grounded research. It is therefore recommended that South African relationship researchers employ careful consideration in choosing a theoretical framework and, if possible, they should try to incorporate existing theories, or elaborate on those already used in relationship research.

6.3 Research participants

6.3.1 *Researching adults*

Most participants included in South African relationship studies are adults. Research on adolescent intimate heterosexual relationships and relationships of people of older age is

however limited. It is therefore recommended that future research include adolescent participants as well as participants of older age in their relationship studies.

6.3.2 *Researching married people*

Most research on intimate heterosexual relationships in South Africa reflects those relationships of couples that have been married for a number of years. Little is known about other forms of intimate heterosexual relationships, such as newly married couples or couples who are not married. Many heterosexual South Africans involved in intimate relationships are not married – either because they are in a dating relationship, cohabitating or because they have been previously married and choose not to marry their current partner. When relationship researchers mostly focus on the experiences of married couples, it compromises the understanding of various forms of intimate heterosexual relationships. It is thus important that further relationship research acknowledges this current gap in relationship research, and attempts to include those relationships previously overlooked.

6.3.3 *Children in intimate heterosexual relationships*

Despite the fact that children influence intimate relationships in profound ways, few South African studies mention whether the participants have children. One could assume that because South African studies mostly focus on longer-term marital relationships children would form part of the equation. It could however be that relationship researchers simply omit to mention the number of children present in an intimate heterosexual relationship, or it could imply the tendency to study intimate relationships without placing it within the broader context of which it forms a part (i.e. the family system). Studying intimate heterosexual relationships without considering the broader family context can however limit researchers' understandings of these relationships as a family functions as a whole, with each part of the system influencing one another (Baron & Byrne, 1994).

It is clear that the influence of children on intimate relationships has not been adequately researched. Further research should therefore firstly state whether the couples included in the studies have children and secondly consider the impact of children on the relationships.

6.3.4 *Focus on individuals rather than both partners*

Most South African studies include only one of the partners involved in an intimate heterosexual relationship. Furthermore, the few studies that do include both partners are mostly concerned

with individuals' accounts of their relationship experiences and not with the interaction between the individuals. This means that relationship research in South Africa do not always provide a comprehensive account of the relationships being studied. Further research should therefore consider the incorporation of both partners' accounts of their relationship. Research should also include more studies on the interaction between couples in order to further our understanding of how people "do" relationships.

6.3.5 *Balanced male-female ratio*

Unlike international relationship research, the male-female ratios of the participants included in the South African studies are well balanced. In other words, the accounts of both males and females are taken into consideration. A tendency has developed, for example, to focus on the experiences of males who are involved in intimate partner violence, where previously the focus was mostly on the women as the abused party. Further research should acknowledge the importance of balancing the male-female participants and continue to include equal numbers of male-female participants in future intimate heterosexual relationship studies.

6.3.6 *Representation of the South African population*

The diverse South African population is not well represented in relationship studies. Despite the fact that the majority of the South African population is Black, most relationship research has included White participants. Together with the focus on mostly White participants' experiences of intimate heterosexual relationships, the tendency exists to include middle-class participants living in urban areas of South Africa.

The richness of the South African population's cultures is mostly embedded in their religion of choice as well as their religious practices. Religion informs people's worldviews, their views of human beings as well as their views about intimate heterosexual relationships. Issues such as power imbalance between males and females, communication, and sexual interaction are often informed by the couple's religion. It is therefore surprising that couples' religion is not often acknowledged as an important determinant of relationship experiences. By omitting this important aspect of human existence, the understanding of how people construct their intimate heterosexual relationships is limited.

It is evident that current relationship research does not reflect the intimate heterosexual experiences of all South African people. Further research is needed on the Black population's

experiences of intimate relationships; and rural participants with a lower socio-economic status, should be included in relationship studies. In addition, the couples' religion needs to be taken into consideration when carrying out further research. Because of the diversity of the South African population, researchers should consider using homogenous sample groups. Researchers will then be able to obtain specific knowledge about a specific population groups' experiences and understandings of their intimate relationships.

6.4 Research methods

6.4.1 *Preference for qualitative research strategies*

In contrast to most international studies, the majority of South African relationship researchers employ qualitative research strategies. They are mostly concerned with individuals' experiences of intimate heterosexual relationships as well as the meaning they attach to the various aspects of these relationships.

Where quantitative methods begin with a series of predetermined categories (usually embodied in standardised quantitative measures), qualitative methods allow researchers to study selected issues in depth and detail. In other words, qualitative research is more commonly used to inductively explore phenomena and then provide a detailed description thereof (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Most South African relationship researchers therefore attempt to study intimate relationships with as much depth and detail as possible.

In real life, relationships with others occur in a social context. These contexts are experienced as dynamic processes and not as static structures (Duck, West & Acitelli, 1997). Quantitative methods are of great value when studying phenomena that can be manipulated and measured in a static way, but the essence of relationships is not so easily captured. By employing a qualitative research strategy, relationship researchers can search for themes and ultimately discover what people actually *do* in relationships. More knowledge can therefore be obtained about people's life experiences in intimate heterosexual relationships. To study intimate relationships in its dynamic essence, it is recommended that qualitative measures should be included in future relationship research.

It is important to reflect on explanations as to why South African researchers mostly employ qualitative research strategies in comparison to quantitative research strategies. One possible explanation could be related to some South African relationship researchers' inclination to use

theoretical frameworks such as postmodernism; feminism and social constructivism (see section 3.2). These approaches are all concerned with the meaning people attach to their experiences and relationships, and therefore the qualitative research strategy would be the most appropriate way of researching such relationship phenomena. The fact that few quantitative relationship studies are being conducted in South Africa could possibly be related to inexperienced researchers' perception that qualitative research is a less complicated research procedure (Pope & Mays, 2000).

6.4.2 Priority is given to the survey method of data gathering

The data gathering technique most often employed is the survey method. Those studies that use the survey method mostly use semi-structured in-depth interviews to gather the necessary data. Considering the fact that most South African relationship studies use qualitative research strategies, it makes sense that this method is most often used. The survey method is a frequently used mode in the social sciences and can be used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purposes. The survey method is the best method available to social researchers who are interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly (Babbie, 2004).

Few researchers employ the observational technique of gathering the necessary data. This could be due to the logistics and practicalities of this method that often appears to be a daunting task. Observations of a couple's interactions, rely predominantly on the researcher's understanding of the relationships, and the research is therefore not based on a couple's self-reports. Because of this, it can produce very valuable understandings of relationship processes between couples. It is therefore recommended that relationship researchers continue to use survey methods of data gathering, more specifically in-depth interviews, but it is also recommended that, where possible, more observation techniques be employed.

6.5 Limitations of the current review

The current review is limited considering the fact that the focus of the review was restricted to concept clarification, the theoretical frameworks employed by researchers, the participants involved in the studies, and the methodologies used by the researchers. Although the research topics of the studies were incorporated in the current review, a thorough overview of the research topics in intimate heterosexual research might provide valuable information.

Another limitation is that the review only included selective international research material, and this review may therefore not be representative of all international relationship research. It is also possible that due to difficulties of accessing South African relationship research, some research on intimate heterosexual relationships in South Africa were not included. Future research will benefit from including all the available literature on intimate heterosexual relationships, both internationally and in South Africa.

6.6 Concluding remarks

Although the field of relationship research in South Africa has expanded over the past decade, a long road still lies ahead. Many of the psychosocial problems in South Africa occur within the context of intimate heterosexual relationships and if we want to address these issues effectively, it is important to gain more knowledge about intimate heterosexual relationships. This literature review has therefore attempted to enhance researchers' understanding of the current state of research on intimate heterosexual relationships within the South African context, in order to identify the gaps and possibilities for future research.

Appendix A: *International relationship research: terms used to describe intimate heterosexual relationships*

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
Marriage	Fincham & Linfield (1997)	123 couples	Couples, wives and husbands	A new look at marital quality
	Larson, Hammond & Harper (1998)	66 couples married for five years or less	Couples	Perceived equity and intimacy in marriage
	Fincham & Beach (1999)	Annual Review article		Marital conflict
	Finkenauer (2000)		Close relationships, marital relationships, partners	Disclosure and secrecy in marriage
	Dickstein, Seifer, St Andre & Schiller (2001)	24 couples		Adult attachment assessment of marriage
	Gallo & Smith (2001)	Married spouses	Husbands and wives, spouses	Attachment style in marriage
	Fincham & Beach (2002)	44 couples in early marriage	Married couples	Forgiveness in marriage
	Fincham, Paleari & Regalia (2002)	171 individuals (92 wives, 79 husbands) from long-term marriages	Intimate relationships	Forgiveness in marriage
	Orbuch & Veroff (2002)	Programmatic review	Couples	Bridging social psychology and the study of early years of marriage
	Beach, Katz, Sooyeon & Brody (2003)	166 spouses with adolescent children	Married couples, spouses	Effects of marital satisfaction on depressive symptoms in established marriages
	Levinger & Levinger (2003)	1 couple in a 52 year marriage	Couple's relationship	How context affects a marriage
	Sanford (2003a)	Married couples	Husbands and wives	Expectancies and communication behaviour in marriage
	Sanford (2003b)	37 married couples	Married couples	Problem-solving conversations in marriage
	Hinchliff & Gott (2004)	28 participants between 50–86 years, married for minimum of 20 years	Long-term marriage	Sexual relationships within long-term marriages
	Franks, Wendorf, Gonzalez & Ketterer (2004)	61 marital dyads	Marital partners	Health-promoting exchanges of older married partners

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
	Sanford (2005)	77 recently married couples	Married couples, husbands and wives	Attributions and anger in early marriage
	Weger (2005)	53 married couples	Spouses, married couples	Disconfirming communication and self-verification in marriage
Relationships	Huston & Levinger (1978)	Annual Review article	Dyadic relationships, informal affective relationships	Interpersonal attraction
	Gilbertson, Dindia & Allen (1998)	112 partners from 56 married or cohabiting couples	Married couples, cohabiting couples	Relational continuity constructional units and the maintenance of relationships
	Hendrick, Dicke & Hendrick (1998)		Partnered love relationships	The relationship assessment scale
	Ikkink & Tilburg (1998)	408 older adults and 2044 of their network members	Personal relationships	Older adults' network members and instrumental support in unbalanced relationship
	Meeks, Hendrick & Hendrick (1998)	140 dating couples	Romantic partners	Communication, love and relationship satisfaction
	Adams & Jones (1999)			Handbook of interpersonal commitment and relationship stability
	Ruvolo (1998)	317 newlywed couples in the first year of marriage	Spouses, marriage	Marital well-being and general happiness of newlywed couples
	Acitelli, Rogers & Knee (1999)	90 unmarried couples, and 148 married couples	Man-woman relationships, committed relationships	Relationship thinking and relationship satisfaction
	Gurung & Duong (1999)	131 undergraduate students in heterosexual relationships		Assessing the concomitants of mixed-ethnic relationships
	Sprecher & Metts (1999)	Sample of romantic couples	Romantic couples, partners, couples	The influence of romantic beliefs on relationships
	Rusbult & Van Lange (2003)	Annual review article	Partners	Interdependence, Interaction, and Relationships
	Baxter (2004)	Discussion article		Relationships as dialogues

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
	Suh, Moskowitz, Fournier & Zuroff (2004)	Same-sex friendships, opposite-sex friendships and romantic relationships	Unmarried, living apart from their romantic partners, not married but living with their romantic partners, married and living with their spouse, married but living apart from their spouse	Gender and relationships: influences on agentic and communal behaviours
	Knudson-Martin & Mahoney (2005)	Couples with children	Couples	Processes that create relationship equality
Close Relationships	Clark & Reis (1988)	Annual Review article	Romantic relationships, marital relationships	Interpersonal processes in close relationships
	Afifi & Mets (1998)	Descriptive research	Relationships	Characteristics and consequences of expectation violations in close relationships
	Banse (1999)	100 Friends, 101 romantic partners	Relationship partners, romantic partners	Affective priming in close relationships
	Fletcher, Thomas & Durrant (1999)	Married couples	Married couples	Cognitive and behavioural accommodation in close relationships
	Cohler (2001)	Discussion article		Discussion of articles studying narratives of close relationships
	Loving (2001)	5 studies were conducted		Socially desirable responding in close relationships
	Frei & Shaver (2002)	Study 1: 189 students (45 men, 143 women) involved in romantic or marital relationship Study 2: 182 introductory psychology students (60 men, 120 women) involved in a relationship Study 3: 319 students (92 men, 226 women) involved in a relationship	Romantic relationships, marital relationships, relationships	Respect in close relationships

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
	Harvey & Wenzel (2002)	Comment on previous articles	Personal relationships, romantic relationships	HIV, AIDS and close relationships
	Burleson (2003)	Review article	Close personal relationships, close relational partners	The experience and effects of emotional support
	Lohmann, Arriaga & Goodfriend (2003)	110 adults in marital or cohabitating romantic relationships	Romantic relationships	Close relationships and place making
Romantic relationships	Cole (2001)	128 couples	Partners, couples	The use of deception in romantic relationships
	Aune & Wong (2002)	113 individuals (47 males, 66 females) involved in a romantic relationships	Casual daters, steady daters, cohabitators engaged couples & married couples	Antecedents and consequences of adult play in romantic relationships
	Busboom, Collins, Givertz & Levin (2002)	417 undergraduate students	Romantic partners	Resources and barriers to friendship quality after romantic relationship dissolution
	Holmberg & MacKenzie (2002)	30 dating couples	Partners, dating couples	Scripts for romantic relationship development as predictors of relational well-being
	Knobloch & Solomon (2002)	328 undergraduate students		Intimacy and the magnitude and experience of episodic relational uncertainty within romantic relationships
	Richards, Butler & Gross (2003)		Dating couples	Emotion regulation in romantic relationships
	Tashiro & Frazier (2003)	92 undergraduate students who had experienced a relationship brake-up in the past 9 months	Close relationships	Personal growth following romantic relationship breakups
	Kachadourian, Fincham & Davila (2004)	184 undergraduate students dating for at least 4 months	Dating relationships, marital relationships	The role of attachment and relationship satisfaction (the tendency to forgive)
	Knobloch & Solomon (2004)	498 participants (249 females, 249 males) currently involved in romantic or potentially romantic relationship	Exclusively dating their partner, their partner dating them exclusively, cross-sex relationships	Interference and facilitation from partners in the development of interdependence within romantic relationships

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
Married couples	Schütz (1999)	25 married couples	Close relationships, partners	Interpersonal conflict in married couples
	Caughlin & Vangelisti (2000)		Couples, partners	Demand/withdraw pattern of marital conflict
	Ridley, Wilhelm & Suzra (2001)	Spouses in 173 intact married couples	Marital relationship, marriage	Married couple's conflict responses and marital quality
	Werner, Green, Greenberg, Browne & McKenna (2001)	Spouses from 264 couples	Spouses	Evidence for the independence of intrusiveness and closeness-caregiving in married couples
	Kilpatrick, Bissonnette & Rusbult (2002)	165 couples in early years of marriage (on average 16 months)	Partners, marriage	Empathic accuracy and accommodative behaviour among newly married couples
	Kurdek (2003a)	Longitudinal study of newlywed couples	Close relationships, marriage	Methodological issues in growth-curve analysis with married couples
	Sanford & Rowatt (2004)	79 married individuals (41 wives, 38 husbands)	Close interpersonal relationships	Experience of emotions in married couples
Couples	Rolland (1994)		Couples	The impact of illness on couples' relationships
	Ruvolo (1998)	317 newlywed couples (161 African-American couples, 155 white couples)	Partners, spouses, marriage	Marital well-being and general happiness of newlywed couples
	Gaines, Granrose, Rios, Garcia, Youn, Farris & Bledsoe (1999)	103 heterosexual interethnic / interracial couples (103 men and 103 women)	Romantic relationships	Attachment style and measures of responses to accommodative dilemmas
	Whiffen, Aube & Sarason (1999)	64 couples	Marriage, spouses, partners	Personality, interpersonal context and depression in couples
	Berg-Cross (2001)		Couples	Couples therapy
	Croyle & Waltz (2002)	56 heterosexual couples	Heterosexual couples	Emotional awareness and couples' relationship satisfaction
	Orbuch, Veroff, Hassan & Horrocks (2002)	Sample of urban white couples and black couples	Marriages	Predicting divorce in black and white couples

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
	Alberts, Yoshimura, Rabby & Loschiavo (2005)	10 satisfied couples	Romantic relationships	Couples' daily conversations
Dating relationships	Byers, Demmons & Lawrance (1998)	51 college men and 57 college women in a dating relationship of 3-36 months	Heterosexual relationships	Sexual satisfaction within dating relationships
	Feeney (1999)	72 couples dating their partners for at least one year	Partners,	Partner's needs for closeness and distance in established dating relationships
	Fitzpatrick & Sollie (1999)		Intimate relationships, ongoing romantic relationships	Contributions to investments and commitment in dating relationships
	Segrin, Powell, Givertz & Brackin (2003)	101 university students involved in non-married, dating relationships of at least 3 months	Dating couples	Symptoms of depression, relational quality and loneliness in dating relationships
Marital satisfaction	Fincham, Harold & Gano-Phillips (2000)	Couples married for 15 – 20 months	Partners, couples, husbands and wives	Association between attributions and marital satisfaction
	Caughlin & Huston (2002)	90 married couples	Spouses, marriage	A contextual analysis of the association between demand/withdraw and marital satisfaction
	Meyer & Landsberger (2002)	73 married women between 25 and 48 years old	Husbands and wives, married men and women	Pathways between adult attachment style and marital satisfaction
	Banse (2004)	333 married couples	Married couples, spouses	Adult attachment and marital satisfaction
Relationship quality	Hassebrauck & Fehr (2002)	Study 1: 371 adults involved in close romantic relationships Study 2: 3325 adults Study 3: 208 Psychology students	Close romantic relationship, married adults, cohabiting adults	Dimensions of relationship quality
	Goodwin & Gaines (2004)	206 married young people		Relationships belief and relationship quality across culture

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
	Sümer & Cozzarelli (2004)	352 students who were in a romantic relationship (93 males, 259 females / 20 married, 332 unmarried) Duration of relationships 2 months to 12 years	Close relationships, romantic partners, couples	The impact of adult attachment on partner and self-attributions and relationship quality
Relationship satisfaction	Feeney (2002)	193 married couples	Couple relationships, marriage	Attachment, marital interaction and relationship satisfaction
	Franiuk, Cohen & Pomerantz (2002)	527 undergraduate students (251 males, 276 females) presently in a romantic relationship	Romantic relationship	Implicit theories of relationships and its implications for relationship satisfaction and longevity
	Emmers-Sommer (2004)	79 participants	Romantic partner, close relationships	The effect of communication quality and quantity indicators on intimacy and relational satisfaction
Romantic partners	Young & Acitelli (1998)	179 men and 198 women who were married or involved in a committed dating relationship	Intimate relationships, partners	The role of attachment style and relationship status of the perceiver in the perceptions of romantic partner
	Bellavia & Murray (2003)	81 college students (31 male, 50 female) involved in heterosexual dating relationships	Dating relationships	Self-esteem-related differences in reactions to romantic partners' moods
	Geher, Bloodworth, Mason, Stoaks, Downey, Renstrom, & Romero (2005)	161 individuals in dating relationships	Dating relationships	Romantic partner perceptions
Dating couples	Vogel, Tucker, Wester & Heesacker (1999)	60 dating couples	Intimate relationships	Traditional gender-role attitudes and behaviours in dating couples

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
	Flora & Segrin (2000)	100 individuals in current romantic relationship, and 100 individuals in recently broken-off romantic relationship	Romantic relationships	Relationship development in dating couples
	Ickes, Dugosh, Simpson & Wilson (2003)	Study 1: 157 participants (84 women, 73 men): 30 not dating, 26 dating non-exclusively, 85 dating exclusively, 8 engaged, 8 married Study 2: 96 heterosexual dating couples Study 3: 74 men, 114 women enrolled in an introductory psychology class	Exclusive partner, engaged, married	The motive to acquire relationship-threatening information
Marital quality	Weigel & Ballard-Reisch (1999)	129 married couples	Husbands and wives, couples, spouses	Relational Maintenance and Marital Quality
	Previti, Amato (2004)	17-year longitudinal study	Marriage, sexual partners	Infidelity and marital quality
Marital interaction	O'Leary & Smith (1991)	Annual Review article	Marriage, close relationships	Marital satisfaction and discord
	Kupperbusch, Levenson & Ebling (2003)	49 male and 31 female retirees	Husbands and wives, spouses	Predicting retirement satisfaction from the emotional qualities of marital interaction
Marital research	Sanford (1998)	37 married couples (74 married individuals)	Marital relationships, marriage, partner	Partner empathic responding
	Karney, Kreitz & Sweeney (2004)	Analyses of data from couples in a study of newly-weds	Couples	Obstacles to ethnic diversity in marital research
Marital conflict	Erbert (2000)	25 marital couples		Perceptions of dialectical contradictions in marital conflict
	Sillars, Roberts, Leonard & Dun (2000)	118 couples	Husbands and wives, spouses	Cognition during marital conflict
Interpersonal Relationships	Berscheid (1994)	Annual Review article	Close relationships	Interpersonal relationships
	Dunbar & Burgoon (2005)	97 couples	Close relationships	Perceptions of power and interactional dominance

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
<i>Heterosexual dating couples</i>	Barta & Kione (2005)	432 college students	Dating, dyadic relationships	Motivations for infidelity in couples
	MacNeil & Byers (2005)	74 heterosexual dating couples		Sexual self-disclosure and sexual satisfaction in couples
<i>Intimate relationships</i>	Kluwer, Dreu & Buunk (1998)	46 male and 46 female participants	Intimate partner	Conflict in intimate relationships
	MacDonald (1999)	293 undergraduate participants	Close relationships	Love and confidence in protection as two independent systems underlying intimate relationships
<i>Marital processes</i>	Gottman (1998)	Annual Review article	Marriage, couples	Psychology and the study of marital processes
<i>Couple relationships</i>	Prager & Buhrmester (1998)	154 commuter university students, 133 cohabiting couples	Cohabiting couples	Intimacy and need fulfillment in couples relationships
<i>Heterosexual romantic relationships</i>	Baxter & Erbert (1999)	100 males and females from 50 heterosexual romantic couples		Perceptions of dialectical contradictions in turning points of development in heterosexual romantic relationships
<i>Couple conflict</i>	Klein & Milardo (2000)	98 dating couples	Partners	The social context of couple conflict
<i>Spouses</i>	Davila & Bradbury (2001)	72 newly married couples	Married couples	Attachment insecurity and the distinction between unhappy spouses who do and do not divorce
<i>Marital instability</i>	Pasley, Kerpelman & Guilbert (2001)		Marriage	Gendered conflict, identity disruption and marital instability
<i>Adult couples</i>	Neff & Harter (2002)	251 couples in long-term heterosexual relationships	Couples, partners, heterosexual relationships	The role of power and authenticity in relationship styles
<i>Significant other</i>	Steiner-Pappalardo & Gurung (2002)	116 undergraduate unmarried women (59) and men (57)	Close relationships	Relationship quality, sex, gender, attachment and significant-other concepts
<i>Intimate partners</i>	Ybema, Kuijer, Hagedoorn & Buunk (2002)	106 intimate partners (72 females, 34 males)	Marriage, cohabiting	Caregiver burnout among intimate partners of patients with a severe illness

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
<i>Personal relationships</i>	Hess (2003)	157 students	Ongoing relationships	Measuring distance in personal relationships
<i>Marital distress</i>	Kurdek (2003b)	538 married couples	Marital relationships	Negative representations of the self/spouse and marital distress
<i>Relationship commitment</i>	Weigel, Bennett & Ballard-Reisch (2003)	Study 1: 161 college students (107 women, 54 men) Study 2: 192 college students (118 women, 74 men)	Seriously dating romantic partner, casually dating, engaged, married	Family influences on relationship commitment
<i>Interpersonal expectations</i>	Rowe & Carnelley (2003)	160 undergraduate students	Close relationships	Attachment style differences in the processing of attachment-relevant information
<i>Relationship functioning</i>	Saffrey, Bartholomew, Scharfe, Henderson & Koopman (2003)	Individuals from 76 couples	Partners	Self and partner perceptions of interpersonal problems and relationship functioning
<i>Romantic involvement</i>	Davila, Steinberg, Kachadourian, Cobb & Fincham (2004)	Study 1: 96 early adolescent girls, Study 2: 94 late adolescent undergraduates (49 men, 45 women)	Romantic relationships	Romantic involvement and depressive symptoms in early and late adolescence
<i>Relationship development</i>	Frey & Karney (2004)	53 newlywed couples	Newly married couples, spouses, romantic relationships	Revision in memories of relationship development
<i>Romantic couples</i>	Galliher, Welsh, Rostosky & Kawaguchi (2004)	Late adolescent romantic couple members	Girlfriends and boyfriends, romantic relationships	Interaction and relationship quality in late adolescent romantic couples
<i>Marital outcome</i>	Kline, Stanley, Markman, Olmos-Gallo, Peters, Whitton & Prado (2004)	couples after engagement, and couples ten months into marriage	Couples, engaged partners, cohabitating partners, married partners	Pre-engagement contribution and increased risk for poor marital outcomes
<i>Relational well-being</i>	Stafford, Kline & Rankin (2004)	A comparison among three relationship groups was undertaken	Married individuals, cohabiters, cohabiters who marry	Relational and individual well-being
<i>Marital relationships</i>	Kirby, Baucom & Peterman (2005)	84 married couples + 4 husbands, and 12 wives	Partners, husbands and wives	An investigation of unmet intimacy needs in marital relationships

Appendix B: South African relationship research: terms used to describe intimate heterosexual relationships

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants (where applicable)	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
Marriages	Van Der Walt (1971)	200 coloured women, married to black men	Married couples	Marital commitments between coloured women and black men
	Jonas (1972)	25 Xhosa women	Marriage partners, traditional marriage, Western marriages	The changing position of women in the marriage and family of the urban Xhosa
	Van der Vliet (1982)	12 Xhosa married couples	Conjugal relationships, marriage partners	Black marriage
	Pretorius (1985)	50 battered wives	Marriage relationship, spouses	Women, as victim of violence within marriage
	De Waal (1987)	Random sample of white married couples	Married couples	The commitment of white married persons to marriage
	Naude (1996)	82 married couples	Married couples, marriage structure, couples	Adult attachment style, marriage structure and marital satisfaction
	Rascher (1996)	Literature review article	Marital partners, couples	An anthropologic perspective on the indigenous law of marriage in South Africa
	Maseme (2003)	14 husbands and wife couples from 7 marriages	Couples	A marriage enrichment programme
Married couples	Theron (1982)	8 married couples (4 pilots, 4 technicians and their wives)	Couples, husband and wives	The marital interaction of married couples before and after the husbands have done border service
	Noble (1992)	Married couples	Marriages	The effect of inter-role conflict on the job satisfaction of married couples in double career marriages
	Rossouw (1993)	20 married couples	Couples	The experience of meaningfulness by infertile married couples

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants (where applicable)	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
	Van Zyl (1993)	Literature and exploratory investigation	Racially mixed couples	The feelings, experiences and needs of racially mixed married couples in the South African context
	Matjila (1999)	25 wives and 25 husbands	Married people,	A communication study of interpersonal conflict of married couples
	Griffith (2000)	10 husband and wives couples	Couple	The subjective experience of the first pregnancy of expectant married couples
<i>Heterosexual relationships</i>	Heyns (1989)	147 adolescent boys	Heterosexual relations	The effects of family structure on the formation and quality of heterosexual relationships of adolescent boys
	Shefer (1996)		Gendered power relations	Young people's construction of heterosexual relationships
	Modipa (1998)		Premarital relationships	Young adult's construction of heterosexual relationships
	Mkhonza (1999)	Heterosexual black female students	Sexual relationships between men and women	Difficulties women encounter in preventing STD's in heterosexual relationships
	Cooper-Evans (2001)		Partners	Low-income women's experience of heterosexual relationships
	Borton (2002)	2 Heterosexual couples who had been married for longer than 15 years	Partners, heterosexual married couples	The construction of power and sexuality in heterosexual relationships
	Minnaar (2003)	Male university students		The construction of masculinities
<i>Intimate relationships</i>	Holmes (1988)	43 male quadriplegics, 8 female quadriplegics, 113 rehab personnel	Interpersonal closeness, interpersonal relationships	Factors critical to the involvement in intimate relationships of quadriplegias

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants (where applicable)	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
	Callaghan (1995)	4 battered and 3 non-battered women		Women's experiences of violence in intimate relationships
	Sonik (1997)		Interpersonal relationships	The impact of parentification on adult intimate relationships
	Williamson (1999)	9 male inmates in prison	Spouses, girlfriends	Homicide in intimate relationships
	Kubeka (2003)	Group of black teenagers	Boyfriends and girlfriends	Exploration of black teenagers' experience and views of violence in the home and in intimate relationships
	Bekker (2001a)		Conjugal relationship	Requirements for validity of customary marriages
	Bekker (2001b)		Lobolo, polygamy	Recognition of customary marriages
	Whelpton & Vorster (2001)		Marital relationships, spouses	Dissolution of customary marriages
Marital satisfaction	Wiggins (1994)	65 married retired couples	Marriage relationship, aging couples	Marital satisfaction of couples during retirement years
	Greeff & De Bruyne (2000)	57 coloured married couples, married for at least 10 years	Marriage, married couples	Conflict management style and marital satisfaction
	Greeff & Malherbe (2001)	57 married couples	Couples, married couples, marital relationship	Intimacy and marital satisfaction in spouses
Romantic relationships	Bedell (2001)	5 women	Romantic partners	Expectations in romantic relationships
	Swart, Stevens & Ricardo (2002)	Males and females	Dating adolescents	Violence in adolescents' romantic relationships
Marital conflict	Leibowitz (1983)	10 married couples	Marriage, married couples	The relationship between sex-role preferences and marital conflict
	De Beer (1997)	15 married couples	Married couples	Irrational cognitions and marital conflict

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants (where applicable)	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
<i>Husband-wife relationship</i>	Gouws (1980)	25 married male alcoholics	Couples, married couples	Role conflict in husband-wife relationships as a factor in alcoholic relapse
<i>Marriage partners</i>	Lourens (2000)	Married couples	Marital relationship, married couples	Guidelines for marriage accompaniment for marriage partners in the mid-life transition
<i>Marital relationship</i>	Adams (1987)	Three groups of women: 15 satisfactorily married non-abused women, 20 unsatisfactorily married non abused women, and 20 unsatisfactorily married abused women	Spouses, couples	Wife-beating among coloureds in South Africa: its impact on the marital relationship
<i>Marital quality</i>	Kruger (1987)	137 married men and women	Marital interaction, married men and women	Work stress and marital quality
<i>Relationship satisfaction</i>	Smith (1987)	Qualitative, phenomenological investigation	Dyadic relationships of cohabiting heterosexual partners (including marriage), close relationships	Androgyny and relationship satisfaction
<i>Married students</i>	Pienaar (1991)	A group of 14 childless student couples, married for less than 5 years and where both spouses are students	Student marriage, married couples, spouses	The marital needs of young married students
<i>Marriage and other intimate relations</i>	Jubber (1994)	50 married men and women; 25 single men and women; 25 divorced / separated women; 25 gay men and lesbian women	Love relations	African marriage and other intimate relations in Cape Town
<i>Married student couples</i>	Smith (1994)	Wives were the studying partners	Marriage, marital adjustment	The connection between stress management strategies and marital adjustment among newly married student couples
<i>Marital interaction</i>	Widrich & Ortlepp (1994)	80 married men employed in a large financial organization	Marital functioning, marriage	The mediating role of job satisfaction in the work stress

Terms used to refer to relationships	Authors	Participants (where applicable)	Related terms used to describe the construct	Topic studied
<i>Heterosexual close relationships</i>	Janse van Rensburg (1995)	26 couples	Close relationships, partners	The politics of identity formation in heterosexual close relationships
<i>Marital or family life</i>	Steyn (1996)	88 groups of participants	Married persons	Values that support quality marital and family life
<i>Marital adjustment</i>	Möller & Van der Merwe (1997)	50 married couples	Intimate relationships, partners, spouses	Irrational beliefs, interpersonal perception and marital adjustment
<i>Dyadic relationships</i>	Pretorius (1997)	166 undergraduate psychology students (65 males, 98 females)	Intimate relationships, confiding relationships, marital relationships	The quality of dyadic relationships and the experience of social support
<i>Interpersonal relationships</i>	Chrissopoulos (1998)	4 intimate relationships, 8 subjects	Intimate relationships	The interpersonal world of the HIV infected person
<i>Intimate heterosexual relationships</i>	Joffe (1999)		Couples	A male analysis of the annoyance/rage continuum in heterosexual relationships
<i>Sexual partnership</i>	Dladla, Hiner, Wana & Lurie (2001)	Rural women between 19-44	Regular partners, casual partners	The sexual partnership or rural South African women whose partners are migrants
<i>Married individuals</i>	Möller, Rabe & Nortje (2001)	17 individuals from distressed marriages, 20 from non-distressed marriages	Marriage	Dysfunctional beliefs and marital conflict I distressed and non-distressed married individuals
<i>Commuter couples</i>	Rabe (2001)	12 participants (8 male, 4 female) who were living in a commuter relationship	Marriage, long-term relationship, commuter relationship, partners	Exploring possible changes in commuter relationships
<i>Intimate partners</i>	Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman & Laubsher (2004)	1368 randomly selected men working in three Cape Town municipalities	Marriage, cohabiting, dating for more than one month, co-parents	Sexual violence against intimate partners in Cape Town
<i>Relationship</i>	Dunkle, Jewkes, Brown, Gray McIntyre & Harlow (2004)	1366 women presenting for antenatal care at four health centers	Intimate partners, stable relationships	Gender-based violence, relationship power, and risk of HIV infection in women attending antenatal clinics in South Africa

Appendix C: International Theoretical Frameworks and Theories

Theoretical Framework / Theories referred to in the literature	Authors	Topic studied
• Attachment theory	Young & Acitelli (1998)	The role of attachment style and relationship status of the perceiver in the perceptions of romantic partner
	Feeney (1999)	Partner's needs for closeness and distance in established dating relationships
	Gaines, Granrose, Rios, Garcia, Young, Farris & Bledsoe (1999)	Attachment style and measures of responses to accommodative dilemmas
	MacDonald (1999)	Love and confidence in protection as two independent systems underlying intimate relationships
	Paley, Cox, Burchinal & Payne (1999)	Attachment and marital functioning
	Davila & Bradbury (2001)	Attachment insecurity and the distinction between unhappy spouses who do and do not divorce
	Dickstein, Seifer, St Andre & Schiller (2001)	Adult attachment assessment of marriage
	Gallo & Smith (2001)	Attachment style in marriage
	Feeney (2002)	Attachment, marital interaction and relationship satisfaction
	Meyer & Landsberger (2002)	Pathways between adult attachment style and marital satisfaction
	Steiner-Pappalardo & Gurung (2002)	Relationship quality, sex, gender, attachment and significant-other concepts
	Johnson & Whiffen (2003)	Attachment processes in couple and family therapy
	Rowe & Carnelley (2003)	Attachment style differences in the processing of attachment-relevant information
	Banse (2004)	Adult attachment and marital satisfaction
	Kachadourian, Fincham & Davila (2004)	The role of attachment and relationship satisfaction (the tendency to forgive)
	Sanford & Rowatt (2004)	Experience of emotions in married couples
• Social learning theory	O'Leary & Smith (1991)	Marital satisfaction and discord
	Fincham & Beach (1999)	Marital conflict
	Caughlin & Huston (2002)	A contextual analysis of the association between demand/withdraw and marital satisfaction
• Interdependence theory	Holmes (2002)	Interpersonal expectations as the building blocks of social cognition
	Kilpatrick, Bissonette & Rusbult (2002)	Empathic accuracy and accommodative behaviour
	Rusbult & Van Lange (2003)	Interdependence, interaction and relationships

Theoretical Framework / Theories referred to in the literature	Authors	Topic studied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Exchange theory</i> 	Huston & Levinger (1978)	Interpersonal attraction
	Ikkink & Tilburg (1998)	Older adults' network members and instrumental support in unbalanced relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Equity theory</i> 	Clark & Reis (1988)	Interpersonal processes in close relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Normative, preventative framework</i> 	Rolland (1994)	The impact of illness on couples' relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Interpersonal exchange model</i> 	Byers, Demmons & Lawrance (1998)	Sexual satisfaction within dating relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Relational Continuity Constructional units of Sigman</i> 	Gilbertson, Dindia & Allen (1998)	Relational continuity constructional units and the maintenance of relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Bank account model</i> 	Gottman (1998)	Psychology and the study of marital processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Investment model</i> 	Fitzpatrick & Sollie (1999)	Contributions to investments and commitment in dating relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Information processing paradigm</i> 	Buyse, De Clercq, Verhofstadt, Heene, Roeyers & Van Oost (2000)	Dealing with relational conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Self influence model</i> <i>Relational influence model</i> 	Caughlin & Vangelisti (2000)	Demand/withdraw pattern of marital conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Theoretical model of play</i> 	Aune & Wong (2002)	Antecedents and consequences of adult play in romantic relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Social psychological theories</i> 	Fincham, Paleari & Regalia (2002)	Forgiveness in marriage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Soul mate theory</i> <i>Work-it-out theory</i> 	Franiuk, Cohen & Pomerantz (2002)	Implicit theories of relationships and its implications for relationship satisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Social cognitive perspective</i> 	Kurdek (2003a)	Methodological issues in growth-curve analysis with married couples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Cognitive theories</i> 	Lohmann, Arriaga & Goodfriend (2003)	Close relationships and place making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Beck's theory on depression</i> 	Segrin, Powell, Givertz & Brackin (2003)	Symptoms of depression, relational quality and loneliness in dating relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Dialectics theory</i> 	Baxter (2004)	Relationships as dialogues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Rational emotive theory</i> 	Goodwin & Gaines (2004)	Relationships belief and relationship quality across culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Berscheid's emotional investment perspective</i> 	Knobloch & Solomon (2004)	Interference and facilitation from partners in the development of interdependence within romantic relationships

Theoretical Framework / Theories referred to in the literature	Authors	Topic studied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Relational dialectics framework</i> 	Sahlstein (2004)	Negotiating being together and being apart in long-distance relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Developmental socialization theory</i> • <i>Social role theory</i> 	Suh, Moskowitz, Fournier & Zuroff (2004)	Gender and relationships: influences on agentic and communal behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dyadic power theory</i> 	Dunbar & Burgoon (2005)	Perceptions of power and interactional dominance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mediation model</i> 	Kirby, Baucom, Peterman (2005)	An investigation of unmet intimacy needs in marital relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Expressive & Instrumental pathways theory</i> 	MacNeil & Byers (2005)	Sexual self-disclosure and sexual satisfaction in couples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Demand/withdraw interaction model</i> 	Weger (2005)	Disconfirming communication and self-verification in marriage

Appendix D: South African Theoretical Frameworks and Theories

Theoretical Framework / Theories referred to	Authors	Topic studied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atheoretical approach 	Theron (1982)	The marital interaction of married couples before and after the husbands have done border service
	Van der Vliet (1982)	Black marriage
	Spangenberg (1986)	Marital violence – opinions from literature
	Adams (1987)	Wife-beating among coloureds in South Africa: its impact on the marital relationship
	De Waal (1987)	The commitment of white married persons to marriage
	Smith (1987)	Androgyny and relationship satisfaction
	Pienaar (1991)	The marital needs of young married students
	Jubber (1994)	African marriage and other intimate relations in Cape Town
	Smith (1994)	The connection between stress management strategies and marital adjustment among newly married student couples
	Janse van Rensburg (1995)	The politics of identity formation in heterosexual close relationships
	Steyn (1996)	Values that support quality marital and family life
	Mkhonza (1999)	Difficulties women encounter in preventing STD's in heterosexual relationships
	Lourens (2000)	Guidelines for marriage accompaniment for marriage partners in the mid-life transition
	Dladla, Hiner, Wana & Lurie (2001)	The sexual partnership or rural South African women whose partners are migrants
	Greeff & Malherbe (2001)	Intimacy and marital satisfaction in spouses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive Behavioural theory 	Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman & Laubsher (2004)	Sexual violence against intimate partners in Cape Town
	Möller, Rabe & Nortje (2001)	Dysfunctional beliefs and marital conflict I distressed and non-distressed married individuals
	Möller & Van der Merwe (1997)	Irrational beliefs, interpersonal perception and marital adjustment
	De Beer (1997)	Irrational cognitions and marital conflict

Theoretical Framework / Theories referred to	Authors	Topic studied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Theory of perception</i> <i>Anthropological model</i> 	Gouws (1980)	Role conflict in husband-wife relationships as a factor in alcoholic relapse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Communication theory</i> <i>General systems theory</i> <i>Freudian theory</i> 	Leibowitz (1983)	The relationship between sex-role preferences and marital conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Context specific approach</i> 	Pretorius (1985)	The women as victim of violence within marriage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Open systems theoretical framework</i> 	Kruger (1987)	Work stress and marital quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Logotherapeutic principles and underlying philosophy</i> 	Rossouw (1993)	The experience of meaningfulness by infertile married couples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Grounded theory approach</i> 	Van Zyl (1993)	The feelings, experiences and needs of racially mixed married couples in the South African context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Interactionist model of stress</i> 	Widrich & Ortlepp (1994)	The mediating role of job satisfaction in the work stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Disengagement theory</i> <i>Activity theory</i> <i>Subculture theory</i> <i>Ecological Systems perspective</i> 	Wiggins (1994)	Marital satisfaction of couples during retirement years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Feminist framework</i> 	Callaghan (1995)	Women's experiences of violence in intimate relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Attachment theory</i> <i>Structural family theory</i> 	Naude (1996)	Adult attachment style, marriage structure and marital satisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Feminist social constructionist theory</i> 	Shefer (1996)	Young people's construction of heterosexual relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Social learning theory</i> <i>General systems theory</i> <i>Communication theory</i> 	De Bruyne (1997)	Conflict management style and marital satisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Postmodernism</i> <i>Social-constructivism</i> <i>Foucauldian theory</i> 	Kottler & Long (1997)	Talk about sexual violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Social constructivism</i> 	Sonik (1997)	The impact of parentification on adult intimate relationships

Theoretical Framework / Theories referred to	Authors	Topic studied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Psychodynamic theories</i> 	Joffe (1999)	A male analysis of the annoyance/rage continuum in heterosexual relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>De Vito's unproductive and productive theories</i> 	Matjila (1999)	A communication study of interpersonal conflict of married couples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulhan's Constrained-Strained theory</i> • <i>Public Health model</i> 	Williamson (1999)	Homicide in intimate relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Psychodynamic paradigm</i> 	Griffith (2000)	The subjective experience of the first pregnancy of expectant married couples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Theories of social cognition and personal constructs</i> 	Bedell (2001)	Expectations in romantic relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Feminist theory</i> • <i>Foucauldian theory</i> 	Borton (2002)	The construction of power and sexuality in heterosexual relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social learning theory & the cognitive-contextual model of role modeling</i> • <i>Trauma theory & the intergenerational transmission of violence</i> • <i>Funnel of violence theory</i> 	Kubeka (2003)	Exploration of black teenagers' experience and views of violence in the home and in intimate relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Post-structuralism</i> • <i>Foucauldian influenced notions of discourse</i> 	Minnaar (2003)	The construction of masculinities

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